INSTRUCTOR(S):

Nandini Sengupta

COURSE #:

ETS 192

COURSE TITLE:

Gender and Literary Texts

- OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK* -

Monday thru Friday: 7AM to Midnight · Saturday: 9AM to 7PM · Sunday: 10AM to 11PM

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NANDINI SENGUPTA
ETS/WSP 192/ SPRING 2003
REVISED CALENDAR

Mar 07, Fri	
Mar 10, Mon	X
Mar 12, Wed	**Spring Break—No Class**
Mar 14, Fri	X
Mar 17, Mon	Selns from *Nineteenth Century Stories by Women* Gaskell-"Lizzie Leigh"
Mar 19, Wed	Gaskell-"The Old Nurse's Story" **Response Paper # 4 (*Cranford*)**
Mar 21, Fri	Egerton-"Gone Under"
Mar 24, Mon	Oliphant-"A Story of a Wedding Tour" **Presentation IV**
Mar 26, Wed	Braddon-"Good Lady Ducayne"
Mar 28, Fri	George Gissing—*The Odd Women* pp 31-74/ Ch I-V **Presentation V** **Response Paper # 5 (Short Stories--any one)**
Mar 31, Mon	*The Odd Women* pp 75-125:Ch VI-X
Apr 02, Wed	*The Odd Women* pp 126-176:Ch XI- XV **Presentation VI**
Apr 04, Fri	*The Odd Women* pp 177-221:Ch XVI-XX **Response Paper # 6 (*The Odd Women*--based on assignment)**
Apr 07, Mon	*The Odd Women* pp 222-272:Ch XXI- XXV
Apr 09, Wed	*The Odd Women* pp 273/305: Ch XXVI-XXIX **Presentation VII**
Apr 11, Fri	*The Odd Women* pp 306-end :Ch XXX-XXXI
Apr 14, Mon	Selns from *The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick Victorian Maidservant* (R) **Presentation VIII** **Response Paper #7 (*The Odd Women*--based on assignment)**

Apr 16, Wed	Cullwick contd.
Apr 18, Fri	Good Friday—No Class
Apr 21, Mon	Selns from *Munby: Man of Two Worlds* (R)
Apr 23, Wed	Munby contd. **Optional Reading:** Leonore Davidoff—"Class and Gender in Victorian England" (R)
Apr 25, Fri	**Presentation IX** **Response Paper # 8 (Cullwick and Munby)**
Apr 28, Mon	Last Class Day. Evaluations.

May 5th Final Paper due.

READINGS ON GENDER

1. Jehlen, Myra --"Gender" in *Critical Terms for Literary Study* ed by Frank Lentrichchia and Thomas McLaughlin.
2. Selns from *Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar.
3. Freud, Sigmund. "Femininity".
4. Davidoff Leonore. "Class and Gender in Victorian England" in *Sex and Class in Women's History* ed by Judith Newton, Mary Ryan, and Judith Walkowitz.
5. Wittig, Monique. "The Category of Sex" and "One is not Born a Woman" from *The Straight Mind and Other Essays.*
6. Selns from *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* by Judith Butler.

ture of one's own is the only thing that can make a work history." As literary historians move into a postmodern age, it is by no means clear that they can afford to jettison Huizinga's difficult imperative.

Suggested Readings

Baldick, Chris. 1983. *The Social Mission of English Criticism, 1848–1932.*
Newton, Judith. 1988. "History as Usual? Feminism and the 'New Historicism.'"
Norbrook, David. 1984. *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance.*
Patterson, Lee. 1987. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature.*
Sammons, Jeffrey L. 1977. *Literary Sociology and Practical Criticism.*
Simpson, David. 1988. "Literary Criticism and the Return to 'History.'"
Williams, Raymond. 1977. *Marxism and Literature.*

Lentricchia + McLaughlin

19

Gender

Myra Jehlen

Like Molière's bourgeois gentleman who discovered one day that all the time he thought he was only talking he was in fact speaking prose, literary critics have recently recognized that in their most ordinary expositions of character, plot, and style they speak the language of gender.*

The terms of critical analysis, its references and allusions, its very structure, these critics now find, incorporate assumptions about the nature of sexual identity that organize and even suggest critical perception. When we describe certain verse cadences as "virile" while naming some rhymes "feminine," when Boswell explains judiciously that "Johnson's language . . . must be allowed to be too masculine for the delicate gentleness of female writing," the conventional meanings of "masculine" and "feminine" shape the sense of literary phenomena that have no intrinsic association with sex. Posited as analytical terms rather than the objects of analysis, these meanings go unexamined and with them aspects of literature that they seem to explain but actually only name. It would not have occurred to Boswell to reverse the direction of his definition and, instead of invoking the conventional attributes of masculinity to define the limits of Johnson's language, cite Johnson's language to define the limits of conventional masculinity. But just such a reversal has been going on in recent critical practice where literary analysis is reflexively querying its own sexual rhetoric. The terms "masculine" and "feminine," which the eighteenth-century biographer assumed

*Webster's *New World Dictionary,* second college edition (World: New York, 1968), defines gender as follows: "The formal classification by which nouns and pronouns (and often accompanying modifiers) are grouped and inflected, or changed in form, so as to control certain syntactic relationships; although gender is not a formal feature of English, some nouns and the third person singular pronouns are distinguished according to sex or the lack of sex (*man* or *he,* masculine gender; *woman* or *she,* feminine gender; *door* or *it,* neuter gender): in most Indo-European languages and in others, gender is not necessarily correlated with sex." This last specification underlies the choice of "gender" over "sex" as the critical term that designates sexual identity and its associated characteristics. For as the discussion below will explain, the argument implicit in analyzing literature from a "gender" perspective is that sexual identity is not "necessarily correlated with sex"; in other words, that biological sex does not directly or even at all generate the characteristics conventionally associated with it. Culture, society, history define gender, not nature.

were standard measures, have become for twentieth-century readers the first objects of critical measurement.

Boswell taking masculinity as a given expressed a traditional conviction that the differences between men and women arise from natural causes to organize the cultural order. Himself "too masculine . . . [for] female writing," Johnson declared women in turn too feminine for masculine pursuits; "'Sir,'" he famously addressed Boswell, "'a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on his hinder legs. It is not done well; but you are surprized to find it done at all'" (Boswell, 327).

Perhaps because upright dogs remain relatively rare while more and more women are taking the podium, Johnson's view that the appurtenances of sex are as distinct as those of species and as surely rooted in biology has lately had to be rethought. The insurgent view that gender is a cultural idea rather than a biological fact shares the ground that it has been gaining with parallel arguments about other identities—of class, of race, of national or religious association. De-naturalizing the character of women is part of a larger de-naturalization of all the categories of human character, which emerges as both a social and a linguistic construction.

Implicating literature in the making of society has a reciprocal implication for literature. If gender is a matter of nurture and not nature, the character conventionally assigned men and women in novels reflects history and culture rather than nature, and novels, poems and plays are neither timeless nor transcendent. This reciprocal historicizing extends to criticism which comes to read in the character of Hamlet, say, instead of a portrait of universal manhood, let alone of universal humanity, an exceptionally resonant but still particular depiction of aristocratic young manhood in Renaissance England (featuring among other characteristic attitudes, the assumption that young men of the dominant class are universally representative.) If literature speaks gender, along with class and race, the critic has to read culture and ideology. It turns out that all the time writers and critics thought they were just creating and explicating transcendence in a separate artistic language, willy nilly they were speaking the contemporary cultural wisdom.

Not all critics have been as delighted as Molière's Monsieur Jourdain to learn that the way of speaking they took for granted constituted a statement in itself. The aspiring bourgeois thought his conversation much enhanced by its participation in the ambient culture, but some critics fear that talk of gender, as of class and race, will rather diminish literature. They worry that reading literature in relation to society will, by rendering literature's meaning more particular, reduce it *to* the particular. But it is possible to argue just the opposite, that uncovering the social and cultural assumptions of literary language actually complicates reading. For when we take fictional characters to be universal, they subsume the particular traits and attributes of different kinds of people—as a character like Hamlet does when he is taken as embodying the general human condition. Ironically such transcendent characterization works reductively to submerge the complexities of human difference; while in order to explicate the particular, a critic needs to focus precisely on distinctions and qualifications, on the complexities of human difference. Against the fantasy of transcendence, a criticism conscious of literature's and its own sexual politics affirms the permanent complexity of engagements and interactions.

This should suggest what it is useful nonetheless to say explicitly: that speaking of gender does not mean speaking only of women. As a critical term "gender" invokes women only insofar as in its absence they are essentially invisible. And it brings them up not only for their own interest but to signal the sexed nature of men as well, and beyond that the way the sexed nature of both women and men is not natural but cultural. In this sense, gender may be opposed to sex as culture is to nature so that its relation to sexual nature is unknown and probably unknowable: how, after all, do we speak of human beings outside of culture? From the perspective of gender, identity is a role, character traits are not autonomous qualities but functions and ways of relating. Actions define actors rather than vice versa. Connoting history and not nature, gender is *not* a category of human nature.

Uncovering the contingencies of gender at the heart of even the most apparently universal writing has been a way of challenging the view that men embody the transcendent human norm, a view to which the first objection was that it was unjust to women. But in proposing gender as a basic problem and an essential category in cultural and historical analysis, feminists have recast the issue of women's relative identity as equally an issue for men, who, upon ceasing to be mankind, become, precisely, men. Thus gender has emerged as a problem that is always implicit in any work. It is a quality of the literary voice hitherto masked by the static of common assumptions. And as a critical category gender is an additional lens, or a way of lifting the curtain to an unseen recess of the self and of society. Simply put, the perspective of gender enhances the critical senses; let us try to see how.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn is a man's book about a boy, and just as likely an object of gender criticism as writing by or about women. Mark Twain's best-known work is a classic or, to use a term also defined in this volume, a canonical text. This story of an adolescent who undergoes a series of trials on the rocky road or the river voyage to adulthood is a central work in the American tradition, a work that articulates and helps define dominant values and ways of seeing the world. Such works and their central characters claim to represent the universal human condition. So one prevailing critical view that *Huckleberry Finn* is "a great book" because it champions "the autonomy of the individual," (Smith 1958, xxix) assumes that "the individual" is generically a self-sufficient being

able to define himself autonomously, meaning apart from society. Note that in the preceding sentence one could not substitute "herself" and "her" nor indicate that the representative individual is black or Asian because specifying an alternative and subcategorical sex or race invokes limits on individual autonomy. On the other hand, not to specify alternative categories of identity subsumes them in the white male norm, when it does not exclude them from it altogether. Huck's individuality transcends all the particularities of his class and generation.

A little like Hamlet, except that Huck is no prince but in fact the antithesis of a prince, occupying the very bottom rung of his social ladder. It has been suggested that in Hannibal society Huck ranks below the slaves, who at least play a useful role in the community, whereas "poor white trash" like him are at best useless and most times a nuisance. The son of the town drunk, almost illiterate, dirt-poor and innocent of ambition for either education, property or shoes, Huck seems to lack all conventional worth, but this only makes him the better embodiment of individual values. For Huck's missing social attributes and graces dramatize his separation from society and make him an emblem of individualism. Huck personally transcends his abjection (as Hamlet, the unsuccessful prince, his loftiness). From the beginning of the story, he is headed out. He starts by leaving the home of the Widow Douglas and the village itself. This places him on the threshold of more radical departures, as Huck opposes his universal principles to the fundamental tenets of both his class and his race. He achieves heroism by renouncing genteel hypocrisies as Hamlet does by denouncing the rot at the Danish court.

For all its systematic extraction of its hero from social categories and roles, however, the novel actually reaffirms one category and role, paradoxically appropriating its terms to depict transcendence. By rejecting the false values of his society, Huck eventually becomes a man of integrity; and whatever else in our culture defines a man's integrity, not being feminine, being un- and even anti-feminine is key. In fact Huck's first passage, once he leaves village society, takes him into a limbo of gender.

Huck's voyage out begins on the island in the middle of the Mississippi where he comes upon the runaway Jim. Having joined forces, the outcast boy and the escaped slave deem it prudent before proceeding with their journey to freedom to see whether they are being pursued. Huck will have to return to the shore to reconnoiter and, to avoid being recognized, he will need a disguise. A deep bonnet such as is worn by local girls seems ideal for the purpose. Dressed therefore in bonnet and gown, Huck sets off, concentrating hard on remembering that he is a girl. Fortunately the first house he comes to is inhabited by a stranger in town, a middle-aged woman to whom, introducing himself as Sarah Williams, he spins a tale about a sick mother for whom he is seeking help. As they sit comfortably chatting, the woman mentions that the entire neighborhood is astir with rumors about Huck Finn's disappearance and probable murder. At first she reports, everyone assumed that the murderer was the runaway Jim but now folks are inclined to believe that it was Huck's own "white-trash" father, who has also disappeared. Still, a reward of $300 has been posted for the slave's capture and the woman herself has great hopes of earning it; for she has seen smoke rising on the island where in fact Huck and Jim are camping, and that very evening her husband is to row out there.

Agitated by this ominous news, Huck cannot keep still and, as an occupation appropriate to his disguise, attempts to thread a needle. His hostess, who is named Judith Loftus, watches his maneuvers with astonishment and a short time later, on the pretext that she has hurt her arm, asks him to throw a lead weight at a rat that has been poking its nose out of a hole in the wall. Naturally Huck throws brilliantly, whereupon she retrieves the weight and tosses it to the seated boy who claps his knees together to catch it. With this, Mrs. Loftus announces triumphantly that she has not been fooled: he is not a girl but a boy apprentice run away from his abusive master. Huck breaks down and confesses to this new identity and, giving him much good advice, Mrs. Loftus sends him on his way. In a panic, he hastens to the island, and arriving, calls out to Jim to hurry, they have to get off at once: "'There ain't a minute to lose. They're after us!'"

This last exclamation deserves all the critical attention it has received. "They" Huck cries to Jim are "after us," but of course "they" are only after Jim. Indeed, in racial and even class terms, "they" include Huck, who at that moment disengages from all his kind to identify with a black man and a slave. Earlier, hearing about the magnificent sum to be had for turning Jim in, Huck was so far from being tempted that Judith Loftus had to explain to him that although her neighbors no longer thought the slave was a murderer, the money was incentive enough to continue the chase. "'Well, you're innocent, ain't you!'" she teases Huck who at this moment has become literally innocent, redeeming himself in these passages from sins of racism and of greed.

This episode culminates Huck's moral and political ascension; he will not rise higher in the rest of the novel but rather slide back. There is an archetypal, typological dimension in this situation of a boy discarding his given identity and recreating himself more just and good. But what is the role in all this of the feminine disguise? Why and to what effect does Huck pass through the crisis of rejecting his born identity dressed as a girl?

We should note first that the plot does not require this costume. Since Mark Twain makes Judith Loftus a stranger, there is no reason why Huck cannot pretend to be a runaway apprentice in the first place. One explanation could be that turning Huck into a girl gives Twain the opportunity to ridicule femininity—something he does intermittently throughout the novel, making fun for instance of female sentimentality in the tear-filled story of Emmeline Grangerford, young poetess, deceased. But if this was the inspiration for the masquerade, it effectively backfired. For the ridiculous figure in the Loftus kitchen is Huck himself,

while in lecturing him on his ineptitude in impersonating the feminine, Judith effects a temporary but nonetheless radical reversal of the very nature of gender. What should have been Huck's saving grace, that he is too boy-like to imitate a girl successfully, cannot redeem his discomfiture; when Mrs. Loftus dispatches him at the end of the scene she is clearly skeptical about his ability to get on even in masculine guise: "if you get into trouble you send word" she offers, "and I'll do what I can to get you out of it." On the strength of this short-lived turnabout, womanhood even develops a maternal aspect all but unknown in the rest of Mark Twain's writings. "Keep the river road, . . . and next time you tramp, take shoes and socks with you," must sound an unaccustomed note to a boy whose experience runs more commonly to scolding aunts than to nurturing mothers.

The motherly Judith Loftus is in command of the scene and of Huck; but most unexpectedly, she is in command of herself, making this explicit when she takes command of femininity itself. In explaining how she has penetrated Huck's disguise, through his inept rendering of girl-ness, she analyzes feminine behavior as if from outside, herself standing apart as much "the individual" as Huck is when he stands apart from his "white-trash" ignorance, or Jim, briefly, from his "black" superstition. For the interval from that speech to the end of the chapter, a few paragraphs later, conventional femininity is a social construction equally with the novel's account of organized religion or the cavalier ethic.

As a social construction femininity has its standard parts. A girl, Judith Loftus tells Huck, can thread a needle, she spreads her lap to catch things which thus land in her skirt, and she cannot throw straight. The precision with which Mrs. Loftus describes how a girl does throw necessarily implies equal knowledge of how boys do it. She can detail femininity because she sees it as a role, which must mean that masculinity is also a role. The logic of this is that anyone who knows the rules can play, boy or girl, man or woman. For instance she has just been playing, pretending not to be able to hit the rat, thus *pretending* to be feminine in order to force Huck to reveal his masculinity. In her criticism of Huck's feminine acting, Judith Loftus labels it just that, acting.

The chapter's opening inaugurates the notion that femininity is a situation by placing us on its threshold: "'Come in,'" says the woman, and I did." No sooner has Huck taken on the role with the name Sarah Williams than he gets his first lesson in how to act as a girl. For while he had meant just to gather information and leave, the good Mrs. Loftus will not hear of the ostensible Sarah's wandering the roads at night alone. To be a girl is to be unable to move about freely: Sarah-Huck will have to wait for a man, Judith Loftus's husband, to return and escort her-him. In this scene displaced to the wings, men wait to act out their parts. Although Mrs. Loftus is the one who has discovered Jim's hiding place, properly, she will send her husband, "him and another man," to effect the capture.

The culminating moment in the reversal of femininity from nature to nurture—from sex to gender—comes toward the end of the episode when after

warning Huck not to go among women pretending to be one of them Judith adds kindly, "'You do a girl tolerable poor, but you might fool men, maybe.'" This is the final blow not to male authority but to the authority of gender itself, for if women recognize femininity better than men that can only mean that femininity is a performance and not a natural mode of being.

Sexual orthodoxy is not self-contained but dualistic, a matter of relations. This interdependence between self-definition and the definition of the opposite gender is especially true for women, whose more restricted horizon is entirely spanned by masculinity. Taken to be rooted in biological propensity, femininity reveals itself, as it refers, first or at least equally, to men, who represent its reason and its rationality and who possess the key to its code as an essential component of their masculinity. If women are born and not made women, men should be the best judges of femininity.

When Judith Loftus tells Huck that women will recognize his absence of femininity but that he may fool men, she posits, on the contrary, a femininity that, instead of reflecting order, generates it, whose original impulse is therefore not biology but ideology. The femininity Mrs. Loftus deploys in restricted travel, sewing, knitting, and maladroit pitching represents its oppositional relation to masculinity as a series of actions that are anything but spontaneous or natural. These actions enact a stance that is willful if not consciously willed. Bring the thread to the needle, she instructs Huck, not the needle to the thread; hold your arm "as awkward as you can" and above all "miss your rat about six or seven foot." Missing rats is what a girl *does*. Let us say the obvious: when it is an action rather than an accident, missing implies the theoretical ability to hit. Nor can we interpret this to mean that, as a boy, Huck can choose to hit the rat or miss him but that a girl could only miss, because all of it, the way to hit and to miss and above all the necessity of choosing between them, is being explained by a woman who controls the entire situation: "'I spotted you for a boy when you was threading the needle; and I contrived the other things just to make certain.'"

Femininity, as Judith Loftus has here defined it, is something women *do*, a composite activity made up of certain acts they perform well and others they as skillfully perform badly, or perhaps most skillfully not at all. Masculinity is the equal and opposite condition: she spots Huck for a boy when after lacking the skill of threading needles—threading is what men skillfully do-not-do—he reveals that he usually wears trousers by clapping his knees together to catch the ball. One suspects, it is true, that sharp-eyed Mrs. Loftus would spot a girl in boy's clothing more quickly than her husband would, but this does not negate the implication of her warning to Huck, that gender is nurture rather than nature. In part this is because the performance of femininity includes observing more shrewdly, especially the performance of gender.

But the other reason for her likely superiority at catching out fraudulent boys as well as girls lies precisely in her ideological stance. At the close of the preced-

ing chapter, before the trip to the village, Jim criticizes Huck, who is practicing walking about in a dress: he "said I didn't walk like a girl; and he said I must quit pulling up my gown to get at my britches pocket." Jim's instructions are negative, as is the entire disguise, whose intent is to hide and not to project, to conceal "real" masculinity. What Huck learns from Judith Loftus, however, is that concealment is not the issue but projection: projection, meaning construction. Extrapolating, masculinity also becomes a construction and in renaming Huck a boy, Mrs. Loftus returns his masculinity to him not in the old absolute terms but as *his* way of performing.

It is this experience, effectively a revolution in the way Huck defines himself in the basic area of gender, that sets the stage for the revolution to come in his sense of himself in the equally basic area of race. The move involved in both transformations is the same, from essentialist to cultural and political definitions of gender and race, from nature to history. When Huck, in that epiphanic cry "'They're after us!,'" casts himself as an object of his own race's persecution, he does not mean that he now considers himself black. Rather he has come to see that in the cavalier South the blackness of an enslaved black man refers not to a set of inherent attributes but to a situation, to an oppression such as can also torment a poor white boy.

The sequence—Huck and Jim on the island as white boy and escaped slave, Huck pretending to be a girl in the Loftus kitchen; Huck and Jim fleeing the island to escape white slavers—places the middle episode in the role not only of catalyst but of mediator. It is in the context of a temporary displacement of his gender identity, and of the questions Judith Loftus raises about gender identity as such, that Huck moves permanently into a new social identity in which, assuming an unquestioned maleness, he questions the other conventions of his culture far more radically than he ever has before. At the moment when he associates himself fully with Jim, Huck Finn and his story might be said to touch bottom in the contemporary culture and ideology and to spring back to an antipode that marks not transcendence but the outer limits of the culturally and ideologically imaginable.

Such moments are not easily sustained. Many students of Mark Twain and *Huckleberry Finn* have noted that after a dazzlingly iconoclastic first half or so the novel retreats toward a disappointingly conventional conclusion; and that on the way, with Huck's complicity, the character of Jim is returned to a black stereotype. The subject here, however, is not *Huckleberry Finn,* but the uses of gender as a critical term that can illuminate not only the literary treatment of associated topics like romantic love and the family but thematic and formal concerns that are not obviously involved with sexual identity at all. We could have fruitfully examined the treatment of the Widow Douglas, for instance, or of Emmeline Grangerford and the contemporary tradition of women's writing which Twain mocks through her, and related these examinations to the novel as a whole. But the issue of gender arises in the Judith Loftus episode in a more generally paradigmatic way, at once overtly, in that Huck pretends to be a girl, and as a deep structure whose ramifications Twain himself may not have fully understood.

These ramifications have to do with the overall theme of the early part of the novel which traces Huck's passage out of his society into a liminal state in which not only his moral philosophy but his very identity is in flux. It is no coincidence that he enters into a state of aggravated mutability by stepping into the woman's sphere of Judith Loftus; nor that her exposition of the inessentiality of femininity immediately precedes his extraordinary identification with a black slave. In this process, race and sex are not wholly analogous: Huck emerges from the encounter with Judith Loftus, indubitably and forever, a boy, whom one cannot imagine actually identifying with a girl, only protecting her. Conversely, the final lesson he learns from Judith Loftus is not the one she means to teach him, since she herself is hell-bent on catching Jim and returning him to slavery. But these complications are precisely the point in manifesting the fundamental or axiomatic character of gender in the organization of thought and writing: by plunging Huck into the deepest possible limbo of identity, this very brief eclipse of his masculinity, even rectified by his inability to maintain the pretense, opens him and Mark Twain's imagination to rethinking the basic principles of personal identity and social ideology both. Through Judith Loftus, the novel speaks as it could not through Huck himself. It is as if the novel itself had found a female voice and the language to say things its male vocabulary could not articulate and therefore did not know, or did not know it knew. The term "gender" can empower criticism in the same way, enabling it to pose new questions and thus discover new levels of interpretation. In reading the Judith Loftus episode, raising gender as an issue affects one's interpretation in a widening circle that finally encompasses the whole novel. At the center of the circle, the very fact of Huck's female impersonation becomes charged with a new energy when it is seen not so much to conceal or erase his masculinity as to render it problematical. So long as masculinity is considered literally organic, Huck's calico gown and bonnet could at the extreme signify his castration without thereby raising questions about masculinity as such. Castration as we know, is the classic stuff of anxiety, but it also allows for total reassurance. In that regard, the episode is entirely reassuring: Huck fails at being a girl because he is so thoroughly a boy. When the issue, however, is not the possession of masculinity but, precisely, its provenance—whether biological or ideological—no such reassurance can be had. On the contrary, the more explicitly the characteristics of masculinity are described, directly or as the reverse of Mrs. Loftus's account of femininity, the more they become contingent, possibly arbitrary, and certainly disputable.

With Huck sitting in Mrs. Loftus's kitchen got up like a girl, nothing any longer is given, anyone can be anything. The certainty of gender provides for

literature generally and for the rest of *Huckleberry Finn* an anchor for the kinetic self. Lifting that anchor even briefly accentuates all the instabilities of Huck's other identifications. The early part of the boy's journey out of town moves toward an indefinite horizon. How indefinite or infinite a horizon is dramatically evident in the explosion of his cry "They're after us!" Joining an escaped slave in the first person plural, he has traveled a cosmic distance which the additional critical perspective of gender helps both measure and explain by bridging the opening of the chapter, in which Huck passes into the world apart of women and the close, which propels him right out of his culture and society. In the end, while discarding the accoutrements of "white-trash" ideology, he will certainly retain the panoply of conventional masculinity. But the fact that he has temporarily put off even that gauges the radical reach of his alienation, and plumbs the depths of its terrors.

In other words, gender is both an embedded assumption and functions as a touchstone for others. It is logically impossible to interrogate gender—to transform it from axiom to object of scrutiny and critical term—without also interrogating race and class. The introduction of gender into the critical discussion multiplies its concerns and categories by those of historiography to produce a newly encompassing account of cultural consciousness that is also newly self-conscious.

From the perspective of gender, then, a critic sees both deeper and more broadly. But the view may also appear more obstructed, exactly the enhancement of critical vision seeming to hinder it, or to interpose a new obstacle between critic and text. In analyzing the ways gender concepts complicate the Judith Loftus episode, this discussion has invoked some issues and ideas which Mark Twain probably did not consciously consider when he wrote it. In a much later story, describing a boy and girl each of whom behaves like the opposite, Twain expresses a clear understanding that gender is a matter of ideology. Or as he puts it more vividly: "Hellfire Hotchkiss [the girl] is the only genuwyne male man in this town and Thug Carpenter's [the boy] the only genuwyne female girl, if you leave out sex and just consider the business facts." (Cited in Gillman, 109–10.) Indeed "the business facts" of sexual identity is about as good a definition of gender as one could offer and Judith's exposition of how girls are made girls and boys boys can certainly be read as an early draft. But within *Huckleberry Finn* itself there is little to indicate such understanding and in fact evidence to the contrary. When the narrator describes women directly they seem rather the incarnation of femininity than its practitioners, innately either sentimental sillies like Emmeline Grangerford or, like the Widow Douglas, pious hypocrites. On the whole in this story, being a woman is not a proud thing.

That Judith Loftus is anomalously admirable is not a problem but that we have read her as defining herself and the scene she dominates in terms for which there seems to be no other reference in the book could be one. The apparent

absence within the text of these critical terms suggests that the reading has introduced its own notions into the writer's world. One of the ways the term "gender" alters the entire enterprise of criticism is by responding positively to such suggestions, though in relation to a revised understanding of the interaction between reading and text. Because an ideology of gender is basic to virtually all thought while, by most thinkers, unrecognized as such, gender criticism often has a confrontational edge. One has to read for gender; unless it figures explicitly in story or poem, it will seldom read for itself. On the other hand "interpretation" is an ambiguous word meaning both to translate and to explain. Literary interpretation does both inextricably, and when critics limit themselves to the explicit terms of the texts they read their interpretations can be more congenial yet not less (re) or (de)constructive. They also interpret who only think to explicate. Literary criticism involves action as much as reflection, and reading for gender makes the deed explicit.

The exhilarating discovery of Molière's bourgeois gentleman, that when he talked he talked prose, has a counterpart in the rather inhibiting epigram that when you speak you have to use words. The term "gender" in literary criticism refers to a set of concerns and also to a vocabulary—what Mark Twain might have called a business vocabulary—that contributes its own meanings to everything that is said or written.

Suggested Readings

No short list of titles can do justice to the rich variety of recent works in gender criticism. Moreover, for an understanding of the general significance of the term it seems as important to develop a sense of its possibilities as to explore these individually in depth. The following are five anthologies that among them offer a wide survey of the field and can provide an excellent introduction to it.

Christian, Barbara, ed. 1985. *Black Feminist Criticism.*
de Lauretis, Theresa, ed. 1986. *Feminist Studies, Critical Studies.*
Hull, Gloria T., Patricia Bell Scott, Barbara Smith, eds. 1982. *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies.*
Kahane, Nannerl O., Michelle Z. Rosaldo, Barbara G. Gelpi, eds. 1982. *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology.*
Miller, Nancy, ed. 1987. *The Poetics of Gender.*

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THE MADWOMAN IN THE ATTIC : THE WOMAN WRITER AND/THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERARY IMAGINATION , NEWHAVEN : YALE UP 1979

SANDRA M GILBERT &
SUSAN GUBAR

Illustration on the preceding page: *Astarte Syriaca*, by Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Courtesy of the City of Manchester Art Galleries.

1 The Queen's Looking Glass: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women, and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity

> And the lady of the house was seen only as she appeared in each room, according to the nature of the lord of the room. None saw the whole of her, none but herself. For the light which she was was both her mirror and her body. None could tell the whole of her, none but herself.
>
> —Laura Riding

> Alas! A woman that attempts the pen
> Such an intruder on the rights of men,
> Such a presumptuous Creature is esteem'd
> The fault can by no vertue be redeem'd.
>
> —Anne Finch, Countess of Winchilsea

> As to all that nonsense Henry and Larry talked about, the necessity of "I am God" in order to create (I suppose they mean "I am God, I am not a woman"). . . . this "I am God," which makes creation an act of solitude and pride, this image of God alone making sky, earth, sea, it is this image which has confused woman.
>
> —Anaïs Nin

Is a pen a metaphorical penis? Gerard Manley Hopkins seems to have thought so. In a letter to his friend R. W. Dixon in 1886 he confided a crucial feature of his theory of poetry. The artist's "most essential quality," he declared, is "masterly execution, which is a kind of male gift, and especially marks off men from women, the begetting of one's thought on paper, on verse, or whatever the matter is." In addition, he noted that "on better consideration it strikes me that the mastery I speak of is not so much in the mind as a puberty in the life of that quality. The male quality is the creative gift."[1]

Male sexuality, in other words, is not just analogically but actually the essence of literary power. The poet's pen is in some sense (even more than figuratively) a penis.

Eccentric and obscure though he was, Hopkins was articulating a concept central to that Victorian culture of which he was in this case a representative male citizen. But of course the patriarchal notion that the writer "fathers" his text just as God fathered the world is and has been all-pervasive in Western literary civilization, so much so that, as Edward Said has shown, the metaphor is built into the very word, *author*, with which writer, deity, and *pater familias* are identified. Said's miniature meditation on the word *authority* is worth quoting in full because it summarizes so much that is relevant here:

> *Authority* suggests to me a constellation of linked meanings: not only, as the OED tells us, "a power to enforce obedience," or "a derived or delegated power," or "a power to influence action," or "a power to inspire belief," or "a person whose opinion is accepted"; not only those, but a connection as well with *author*—that is, a person who originates or gives existence to something, a begetter, beginner, father, or ancestor, a person also who sets forth written statements. There is still another cluster of meanings: *author* is tied to the past participle *auctus* of the verb *augere*; therefore *auctor*, according to Eric Partridge, is literally an increaser and thus a founder. *Auctoritas* is production, invention, cause, in addition to meaning a right of possession. Finally, it means continuance, or a causing to continue. Taken together these meanings are all grounded in the following notions: (1) that of the power of an individual to initiate, institute, establish—in short, to begin; (2) that this power and its product are an increase over what had been there previously; (3) that the individual wielding this power controls its issue and what is derived therefrom; (4) that authority maintains the continuity of its course.[2]

In conclusion, Said, who is discussing "The Novel as Beginning Intention," remarks that "All four of these [last] abstractions can be used to describe the way in which narrative fiction asserts itself psychologically and aesthetically through the technical efforts of the

novelist." But they can also, of course, be used to describe both the author and the authority of any literary text, a point Hopkins's sexual/aesthetic theory seems to have been designed to elaborate. Indeed, Said himself later observes that a convention of most literary texts is "that the unity or integrity of the text is maintained by a series of genealogical connections: author—text, beginning-middle-end, text—meaning, reader—interpretation, and so on. *Underneath all these is the imagery of succession, of paternity, or hierarchy*" (italics ours).[3]

There is a sense in which the very notion of paternity is itself, as Stephen Dedalus puts it in *Ulysses*, a "legal fiction,"[4] a story requiring imagination if not faith. A man cannot verify his fatherhood by either sense or reason, after all; that his child is *his* is in a sense a tale he tells himself to explain the infant's existence. Obviously, the anxiety implicit in such storytelling urgently needs not only the reassurances of male superiority that patriarchal misogyny implies, but also such compensatory fictions of the Word as those embodied in the genealogical imagery Said describes. Thus it is possible to trace the history of this compensatory, sometimes frankly stated and sometimes submerged imagery that elaborates upon what Stephen Dedalus calls the "mystical estate" of paternity[5] through the works of many literary theoreticians besides Hopkins and Said. Defining poetry as a mirror held up to nature, the mimetic aesthetic that begins with Aristotle and descends through Sidney, Shakespeare, and Johnson implies that the poet, like a lesser God, has made or engendered an alternative, mirror-universe in which he actually seems to enclose or trap shadows of reality. Similarly, Coleridge's Romantic concept of the human "imagination or esemplastic power" is of a virile, generative force which echoes "the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM," while Ruskin's phallic-sounding "Penetrative Imagination" is a "possession-taking faculty" and a "piercing . . . mind's tongue" that seizes, cuts down, and gets at the root of experience in order "to throw up what new shoots it will."[6] In all these aesthetics the poet, like God the Father, is a paternalistic ruler of the fictive world he has created. Shelley called him a "legislator." Keats noted, speaking of writers, that "the antients [*sic*] were Emperors of vast Provinces" though "each of the moderns" is merely an "Elector of Hanover."[7]

In medieval philosophy, the network of connections among sexual, literary, and theological metaphors is equally complex: God the

Father both engenders the cosmos and, as Ernst Robert Curtius notes, writes the Book of Nature: both tropes describe a single act of creation.[8] In addition, the Heavenly Author's ultimate eschatological power is made manifest when, as the *Liber Scriptus* of the traditional requiem mass indicates, He writes the Book of Judgment. More recently, male artists like the Earl of Rochester in the seventeenth century and Auguste Renoir in the nineteenth, have frankly defined aesthetics based on male sexual delight. "I . . . never Rhym'd, but for my Pintle's [penis's] sake," declares Rochester's witty Timon,[9] and (according to the painter Bridget Riley) Renoir "is supposed to have said that he painted his paintings with his prick."[10] Clearly, both these artists believe, with Norman O. Brown, that "the penis is the head of the body," and they might both agree, too, with John Irwin's suggestion that the relationship "of the masculine self with the feminine-masculine work is also an autoerotic act . . . a kind of creative onanism in which through the use of the phallic pen on the 'pure space' of the virgin page . . . the self is continually spent and wasted. . . ."[11] No doubt it is for all these reasons, moreover, that poets have traditionally used a vocabulary derived from the patriarchal "family romance" to describe their relations with each other. As Harold Bloom has pointed out, "from the sons of Homer to the sons of Ben Jonson, poetic influence [has] been described as a filial relationship," a relationship of "*sonship*." The fierce struggle at the heart of literary history, says Bloom, is a "battle between strong equals, father and son as mighty opposites, Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads."[12]

Though many of these writers use the metaphor of literary paternity in different ways and for different purposes, all seem overwhelmingly to agree that a literary text is not only speech quite literally embodied, but also power mysteriously made manifest, made flesh. In patriarchal Western culture, therefore, the text's author is a father, a progenitor, a procreator, an aesthetic patriarch whose pen is an instrument of generative power like his penis. More, his pen's power, like his penis's power, is not just the ability to generate life but the power to create a posterity to which he lays claim, as, in Said's paraphrase of Partridge, "an increaser and thus a founder." In this respect, the pen is truly mightier than its phallic counterpart the sword, and in patriarchy more resonantly sexual. Not only does the

writer respond to his muse's quasi-sexual excitation with an outpouring of the aesthetic energy Hopkins called "the fine delight that fathers thought"—a delight poured seminally from pen to page—but as the author of an enduring text the writer engages the attention of the future in exactly the same way that a king (or father) "owns" the homage of the present. No sword-wielding general could rule so long or possess so vast a kingdom.

Finally, that such a notion of "ownership" or possession is embedded in the metaphor of paternity leads to yet another implication of this complex metaphor. For if the author/father is owner of his text and of his reader's attention, he is also, of course, owner/possessor of the subjects of his text, that is to say of those figures, scenes, and events—those brain children—he has both incarnated in black and white and "bound" in cloth or leather. Thus, because he is an *author*, a "man of letters" is simultaneously, like his divine counterpart, a father, a master or ruler, and an owner: the spiritual type of a patriarch, as we understand that term in Western society.

Where does such an implicitly or explicitly patriarchal theory of literature leave literary women? If the pen is a metaphorical penis, with what organ can females generate texts? The question may seem frivolous, but as our epigraph from Anaïs Nin indicates, both the patriarchal etiology that defines a solitary Father God as the only creator of all things, and the male metaphors of literary creation that depend upon such an etiology, have long "confused" literary women, readers and writers alike. For what if such a proudly masculine cosmic Author is the sole legitimate model for all earthly authors? Or worse, what if the male generative power is not just the only legitimate power but the only power there is? That literary theoreticians from Aristotle to Hopkins seemed to believe this was so no doubt prevented many women from ever "attempting the pen"—to use Anne Finch's phrase—and caused enormous anxiety in generations of those women who were "presumptuous" enough to dare such an attempt. Jane Austen's Anne Elliot understates the case when she decorously observes, toward the end of *Persuasion*, that "men have had every advantage of us in telling their story. Education has been theirs in so much higher a degree; the pen has been in their

hands" (II, chap. 11).[13] For, as Anne Finch's complaint suggests, the pen has been defined as not just accidentally but essentially a male "tool," and therefore not only inappropriate but actually alien to women. Lacking Austen's demure irony, Finch's passionate protest goes almost as far toward the center of the metaphor of literary paternity as Hopkins's letter to Canon Dixon. Not only is "a woman that attempts the pen" an intrusive and "presumptuous Creature," she is absolutely unredeemable: no virtue can outweigh the "fault" of her presumption because she has grotesquely crossed boundaries dictated by Nature:

> They tell us, we mistake our sex and way;
> Good breeding, fassion, dancing, dressing, play
> Are the accomplishments we shou'd desire;
> To write, or read, or think, or to enquire
> Wou'd cloud our beauty, and exaust our time,
> And interrupt the conquests of our prime;
> Whilst the dull mannage, of a servile house
> Is held by some, our outmost art and use.[14]

Because they are by definition male activities, this passage implies, writing, reading, and thinking are not only alien but also inimical to "female" characteristics. One hundred years later, in a famous letter to Charlotte Brontë, Robert Southey rephrased the same notion: "Literature is not the business of a woman's life, and it cannot be."[15] It cannot be, the metaphor of literary paternity implies, because it is physiologically as well as sociologically impossible. If male sexuality is integrally associated with the assertive presence of literary power, female sexuality is associated with the absence of such power, with the idea—expressed by the nineteenth-century thinker Otto Weininger—that "woman has no share in ontological reality." As we shall see, a further implication of the paternity/creativity metaphor is the notion (implicit both in Weininger and in Southey's letter) that women exist only to be acted on by men, both as literary and as sensual objects. Again one of Anne Finch's poems explores the assumptions submerged in so many literary theories. Addressing three male poets, she exclaims:

> Happy you three! happy the Race of Men!
> Born to inform or to correct the Pen
> To proffitts pleasures freedom and command

> Whilst we beside you but as Cyphers stand
> T' increase your Numbers and to swell th' account
> Of your delights which from our charms amount
> And sadly are by this distinction taught
> That since the Fall (by our seducement wrought)
> Our is the greater losse as ours the greater fault.[16]

Since Eve's daughters have fallen so much lower than Adam's sons, this passage says, *all* females are "Cyphers"—nullities, vacancies—existing merely and punningly to increase male "Numbers" (either poems or persons) by pleasuring either men's bodies or their minds, their penises or their pens.

In that case, however, devoid of what Richard Chase once called "the masculine *élan*," and implicitly rejecting even the slavish consolations of her "femininity," a literary woman is doubly a "Cypher," for she is really a "eunuch," to use the striking figure Germaine Greer applied to all women in patriarchal society. Thus Anthony Burgess recently declared that Jane Austen's novels fail because her writing "lacks a strong male thrust," and William Gass lamented that literary women "lack that blood congested genital drive which energizes every great style."[17] The assumptions that underlie their statements were articulated more than a century ago by the nineteenth-century editor-critic Rufus Griswold. Introducing an anthology entitled *The Female Poets of America*, Griswold outlined a theory of literary sex roles which builds upon, and clarifies, these grim implications of the metaphor of literary paternity.

> It is less easy to be assured of the genuineness of literary ability in women than in men. The moral nature of women, in its finest and richest development, partakes of some of the qualities of genius; it assumes, at least, the similitude of that which in men is the characteristic or accompaniment of the highest grade of mental inspiration. We are in danger, therefore, of mistaking for the efflorescent energy of creative intelligence, that which is only the exuberance of personal "feelings unemployed." . . . The most exquisite susceptibility of the spirit, and the capacity to mirror in dazzling variety the effects which circumstances or surrounding minds work upon it, may be accompanied by *no power to originate, nor even, in any proper sense, to reproduce.* [Italics ours][18]

Since Griswold has actually compiled a collection of poems by women, he plainly does not believe that all women lack reproductive or generative literary power all the time. His gender-definitions imply, however, that when such creative energy appears in a woman it may be anomalous, freakish, because as a "male" characteristic it is essentially "unfeminine."

The converse of these explicit and implicit definitions of "femininity" may also be true for those who develop literary theories based upon the "mystical estate" of fatherhood: if a woman lacks generative literary power, then a man who loses or abuses such power becomes like a eunuch—or like a woman. When the imprisoned Marquis de Sade was denied "any use of pencil, ink, pen, and paper," declares Roland Barthes, he was figuratively emasculated, for "the scriptural sperm" could flow no longer, and "without exercise, without a pen, Sade [become] *bloated*, [became] a eunuch." Similarly, when Hopkins wanted to explain to R. W. Dixon the aesthetic consequences of a *lack* of male mastery, he seized upon an explanation which developed the implicit parallel between women and eunuchs, declaring that "if the life" is not "conveyed into the work and . . . displayed there . . . the product is one of those *hens' eggs* that are good to eat and look just like live ones but never hatch" (italics ours).[19] And when, late in his life, he tried to define his own sense of sterility, his thickening writer's block, he described himself (in the sonnet "The Fine Delight That Fathers Thought") both as a eunuch and *as a woman*, specifically a woman deserted by male power: "the widow of an insight lost," surviving in a diminished "winter world" that entirely lacks "the roll, the rise, the carol, the creation" of male generative power, whose "strong / Spur" is phallically "live and lancing like the blow pipe flame." And once again some lines from one of Anne Finch's plaintive protests against male literary hegemony seem to support Hopkins's image of the powerless and sterile woman artist. Remarking in the conclusion of her "Introduction" to her *Poems* that women are "to be dull / Expected and dessigned" she does not repudiate such expectations, but on the contrary admonishes herself, with bitter irony, to *be* dull:

> Be caution'd then my Muse, and still retir'd;
> Nor be dispis'd, aiming to be admir'd;

> Conscious of wants, still with contracted wing,
> To some few friends, and to thy sorrows sing;
> For groves of Lawrell, thou wert never meant;
> Be dark enough thy shades, and be thou there content.[20]

Cut off from generative energy, in a dark and wintry world, Finch seems to be defining herself here not only as a "Cypher" but as "the widow of an insight lost."

Finch's despairing (if ironic) acceptance of male expectations and designs summarizes in a single episode the coercive power not only of cultural constraints but of the literary texts which incarnate them. For it is as much from literature as from "life" that literate women learn they are "to be dull / Expected and dessigned." As Leo Bersani puts it, written "language doesn't merely describe identity but actually produces moral and perhaps even physical identity. . . . We have to allow for a kind of dissolution or at least elasticity of being induced by an immersion in literature."[21] A century and a half earlier, Jane Austen had Anne Elliot's interlocutor, Captain Harville, make a related point in *Persuasion*. Arguing women's inconstancy over Anne's heated objections, he notes that "all histories are against you—all stories, prose, and verse. . . . I could bring you fifty quotations in a moment on my side the argument, and I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy" (II, chap. 11). To this Anne responds, as we have seen, that the pen has been in male hands. In the context of Harville's speech, her remark implies that women have not only been excluded from authorship but in addition they have been subjust to (and subjects of) male authority. With Chaucer's astute Wife of Bath, therefore, Anne might demand, "Who peynted the leoun, tel me who?" And, like the Wife's, her own answer to her own rhetorical question would emphasize our culture's historical confusion of literary authorship with patriarchal authority:

> By God, if wommen hadde writen stories,
> As clerkes han withinne hir oratories,
> They wolde han writen of men more wikednesse
> Than all the mark of Adam may redresse.

In other words, what Bersani, Austen, and Chaucer all imply is that, precisely because a writer "fathers" his text, his literary creations (as we pointed out earlier) are his possession, his property. Having defined them in language and thus generated them, he owns them, controls them, and encloses them on the printed page. Describing his earliest sense of vocation as a writer, Jean-Paul Sartre recalled in *Les Mots* his childhood belief that "to write was to engrave new beings upon [the infinite Tables of the Word] or . . . to catch living things in the trap of phrases."[22] Naive as such a notion may seem on the face of it, it is not "wholly an illusion, for it is his [Sartre's] truth," as one commentator observes[23]—and indeed it is every writer's "truth," a truth which has traditionally led male authors to assume patriarchal rights of ownership over the female "characters" they engrave upon "the infinite Tables of the Word."

Male authors have also, of course, generated male characters over whom they would seem to have had similar rights of ownership. But further implicit in the metaphor of literary paternity is the idea that each man, arriving at what Hopkins called the "puberty" of his creative gift, has the ability, even perhaps the obligation, to talk back to other men by generating alternative fictions of his own. Lacking the pen/penis which would enable them similarly to refute one fiction by another, women in patriarchal societies have historically been reduced to *mere* properties, to characters and images imprisoned in male texts because generated solely, as Anne Elliot and Anne Finch observe, by male expectations and designs.

Like the metaphor of literary paternity itself, this corollary notion that the chief creature man has generated is woman has a long and complex history. From Eve, Minerva, Sophia, and Galatea onward, after all, patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs, and ingenuity. For Blake the eternal female was at her best an Emanation of the male creative principle. For Shelley she was an epi-psyche, a soul out of the poet's soul, whose inception paralleled on a spiritual plane the solider births of Eve and Minerva. Throughout the history of Western culture, moreover, male-engendered female figures as superficially disparate as Milton's Sin, Swift's Chloe, and Yeats's Crazy Jane have incarnated men's ambivalence not only toward female sexuality but toward their own (male) physicality. At the same time, male

texts, continually elaborating the metaphor of literary paternity, have continually proclaimed that, in Honoré de Balzac's ambiguous words, "woman's virtue is man's greatest invention."[24] A characteristically condensed and oracular comment by Norman O. Brown perfectly summarizes the assumptions on which all such texts are based:

> Poetry, the creative act, the act of life, the archetypal sexual act. Sexuality is poetry. The lady is our creation, or Pygmalion's statue. The lady is the poem; [Petrarch's] Laura is, really, poetry.[25]

No doubt this complex of metaphors and etiologies simply reflects not just the fiercely patriarchal structure of Western society but also the underpinning of misogyny upon which that severe patriarchy has stood. The roots of "authority" tell us, after all, that if woman is man's property then he must have authored her, just as surely as they tell us that if he authored her she must be his property. As a creation "penned" by man, moreover, woman has been "penned up" or "penned in." As a sort of "sentence" man has spoken, she has herself been "sentenced": fated, jailed, for he has both "indited" her and "indicted" her. As a thought he has "framed," she has been both "framed" (enclosed) in his texts, glyphs, graphics, and "framed up" (found guilty, found wanting) in his cosmologies. For as Humpty Dumpty tells Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, the "master" of words, utterances, phrases, literary properties, "can manage the whole lot of them!"[26] The etymology and etiology of masculine authority are, it seems, almost necessarily identical. However, for women who felt themselves to be more than, in every sense, the properties of literary texts, the problem posed by such authority was neither metaphysical nor philological, but (as the pain expressed by Anne Finch and Anne Elliot indicates) psychological. Since both patriarchy and its texts subordinate and imprison women, before women can even attempt that pen which is so rigorously kept from them they must escape just those male texts which, defining them as "Cyphers," deny them the autonomy to formulate alternatives to the authority that has imprisoned them and kept them from attempting the pen.

The vicious circularity of this problem helps explain the curious passivity with which Finch responded (or pretended to respond) to

male expectations and designs, and it helps explain, too, the centuries-long silence of so many women who must have had talents comparable to Finch's. A final paradox of the metaphor of literary paternity is the fact that in the same way an author both generates and imprisons his fictive creatures, he silences them by depriving them of autonomy (that is, of the power of independent speech) even as he gives them life. He silences them and, as Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" suggests, he stills them, or—embedding them in the marble of his art—kills them. As Albert Gelpi neatly puts it, "the artist kills experience into art, for temporal experience can only escape death by dying into the 'immortality' of artistic form. The fixity of 'life' in art and the fluidity of 'life' in nature are incompatible."[27] The pen, therefore, is not only mightier than the sword, it is also *like* the sword in its power—its need, even—to kill. And this last attribute of the pen once again seems to be associatively linked with its metaphorical maleness. Simone de Beauvoir has commented that the human male's "transcendence" of nature is symbolized by his ability to hunt and kill, just as the human female's identification with nature, her role as a symbol of immanence, is expressed by her central involvement in that life-giving but involuntary birth process which perpetuates the species. Thus, superiority—or authority—"has been accorded in humanity not to the sex that brings forth but to that which kills."[28] In D. H. Lawrence's words, "the Lords of Life are the Masters of Death"—and therefore, patriarchal poetics implies, they are the masters of art.[29]

Commentators on female subordination from Freud and Horney to de Beauvoir, Wolfgang Lederer, and most recently, Dorothy Dinnerstein, have of course explored other aspects of the relationship between the sexes that also lead men to want figuratively to "kill" women. What Horney called male "dread" of the female is a phenomenon to which Lederer has devoted a long and scholarly book.[30] Elaborating on de Beauvoir's assertion that as mother of life "woman's first lie, her first treason [seems to be] that of life itself—life which, though clothed in the most attractive forms, is always infested by the ferments of age and death," Lederer remarks upon woman's own tendency to "kill" *herself* into art in order "to appeal to man":

> From the Paleolithic on, we have evidence that woman, through careful coiffure, through adornment and makeup, tried to stress the eternal type rather than the mortal self. Such makeup, in Africa or Japan, may reach the, to us, somewhat estranging degree of a lifeless mask—and yet that is precisely the purpose of it: where nothing is lifelike, nothing speaks of death.[31]

For yet another reason, then, it is no wonder that women have historically hesitated to attempt the pen. Authored by a male God and by a godlike male, killed into a "perfect" image of herself, the woman writer's self-contemplation may be said to have begun with a searching glance into the mirror of the male-inscribed literary text. There she would see at first only those eternal lineaments fixed on her like a mask to conceal her dreadful and bloody link to nature. But looking long enough, looking hard enough, she would see—like the speaker of Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's "The Other Side of the Mirror"—an enraged prisoner: herself. The poem describing this vision is central to the feminist poetics we are trying to construct:

I sat before my glass one day,
  And conjured up a vision bare,
Unlike the aspects glad and gay,
  That erst were found reflected there—
The vision of a woman, wild
  With more than womanly despair.

Her hair stood back on either side
  A face bereft of loveliness.
It had no envy now to hide
  What once no man on earth could guess.
It formed the thorny aureole
  Of hard unsanctified distress.

Her lips were open—not a sound
  Came through the parted lines of red.
Whate'er it was, the hideous wound
  In silence and in secret bled.
No sigh relieved her speechless woe,
  She had no voice to speak her dread.

And in her lurid eyes there shone
  The dying flame of life's desire,
Made mad because its hope was gone,

And kindled at the leaping fire
Of jealousy, and fierce revenge,
And strength that could not change nor tire.

Shade of a shadow in the glass,
O set the crystal surface free!
Pass—as the fairer visions pass—
Nor ever more return, to be
The ghost of a distracted hour,
That heard me whisper, 'I am she!'[32]

What this poem suggests is that, although the woman who is the prisoner of the mirror/text's images has "no voice to speak her dread," although "no sigh" interrupts "her speechless woe," she has an invincible sense of her own autonomy, her own interiority; she has a sense, to paraphrase Chaucer's Wife of Bath, of the authority of her own experience.[33] The power of metaphor, says Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's poem, can only extend so far. Finally, no human creature can be completely silenced by a text or by an image. Just as stories notoriously have a habit of "getting away" from their authors, human beings since Eden have had a habit of defying authority, both divine and literary.[34]

Once more the debate in which Austen's Anne Elliot and her Captain Harville engage is relevant here, for it is surely no accident that the question these two characters are discussing is woman's "inconstancy"—her refusal, that is, to be fixed or "killed" by an author/owner, her stubborn insistence on her own way. That male authors berate her for this refusal even while they themselves generate female characters who (as we shall see) perversely display "monstrous" autonomy is one of the ironies of literary art. From a female perspective, however, such "inconstancy" can only be encouraging, for—implying duplicity—it suggests that women themselves have the power to create themselves as characters, even perhaps the power to reach toward the woman trapped on the other side of the mirror/text and help her to climb out.

Before the woman writer can journey through the looking glass toward literary autonomy, however, she must come to terms with

the images on the surface of the glass, with, that is, those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face both to lessen their dread of her "inconstancy" and—by identifying her with the "eternal types" they have themselves invented—to possess her more thoroughly. Specifically, as we will try to show here, a woman writer must examine, assimilate, and transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster" which male authors have generated for her. Before we women can write, declared Virginia Woolf, we must "kill" the "angel in the house."[35] In other words, women must kill the aesthetic ideal through which they themselves have been "killed" into art. And similarly, all women writers must kill the angel's necessary opposite and double, the "monster" in the house, whose Medusa-face also kills female creativity. For us as feminist critics, however, the Woolfian act of "killing" both angels and monsters must here begin with an understanding of the nature and origin of these images. At this point in our construction of a feminist poetics, then, we really must dissect in order to murder. And we must particularly do this in order to understand literature by women because, as we shall show, the images of "angel" and "monster" have been so ubiquitous throughout literature by men that they have also pervaded women's writing to such an extent that few women have definitively "killed" either figure. Rather, the female imagination has perceived itself, as it were, through a glass darkly: until quite recently the woman writer has had (if only unconsciously) to define herself as a mysterious creature who resides behind the angel or monster or angel/monster image that lives on what Mary Elizabeth Coleridge called "the crystal surface."

For all literary artists, of course, self-definition necessarily precedes self-assertion: the creative "I AM" cannot be uttered if the "I" knows not what it is. But for the female artist the essential process of self-definition is complicated by all those patriarchal definitions that intervene between herself and herself. From Anne Finch's Ardelia, who struggles to escape the male designs in which she feels herself enmeshed, to Sylvia Plath's "Lady Lazarus," who tells "Herr Doktor . . . Herr Enemy" that "I am your opus, / I am your valuable,"[36] the woman writer acknowledges with pain, confusion, and anger that what she sees in the mirror is usually a male construct, the "pure gold baby" of male brains, a glittering and wholly artificial

child. With Christina Rossetti, moreover, she realizes that the male artist often "feeds" upon his female subject's face "not as she is but as she fills his dreams."[37] Finally, as "A Woman's Poem" of 1859 simply puts it, the woman writer insists that "You [men] make the worlds wherein you move. . . . Our world (alas you make that too!)" —and in its narrow confines, "shut in four blank walls . . . we act our parts."[38]

Though the highly stylized women's roles to which this last poem alludes are all ultimately variations upon the roles of angel and monster, they seem on the surface quite varied, because so many masks, reflecting such an elaborate typology, have been invented for women. A crucial passage from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* suggests both the mystifying deathliness and the mysterious variety female artists perceive in male imagery of women. Contemplating a portrait of her mother which, significantly, was made after its subject was dead (so that it is a kind of death mask, an image of a woman metaphorically killed into art) the young Aurora broods on the work's iconography. Noting that her mother's chambermaid had insisted upon having her dead mistress painted in "the red stiff silk" of her court dress rather than in an "English-fashioned shroud," she remarks that the effect of this unlikely costume was "very strange." As the child stared at the painting, her mother's "swan-like supernatural white life" seemed to mingle with "whatever I last read, or heard, or dreamed," and thus in its charismatic beauty, her mother's image became

> by turns
> Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch, and sprite;
> A dauntless Muse who eyes a dreadful Fate;
> A loving Psyche who loses sight of Love;
> A still Medusa with mild milky brows,
> All curdled and all clothed upon with snakes
> Whose slime falls fast as sweat will; or anon
> Our Lady of the Passion, stabbed with swords
> Where the Babe sucked; or Lamia in her first
> Moonlighted pallor, ere she shrunk and blinked,
> And shuddering wriggled down to the unclean;
> Or my own mother, leaving her last smile

> In her last kiss upon the baby-mouth
> My father pushed down on the bed for that;
> Or my dead mother, without smile or kiss,
> Buried at Florence.[39]

The female forms Aurora sees in her dead mother's picture are extreme, melodramatic, gothic—"Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch, and sprite"—specifically, as she tells us, because her reading merges with her seeing. What this implies, however, is not only that she herself is fated to inhabit male-defined masks and costumes, as her mother did, but that male-defined masks and costumes inevitably inhabit *her*, altering her vision. Aurora's self-development as a poet is the central concern of Barrett Browning's *Bildungsroman* in verse, but if she is to be a poet she must deconstruct the dead self that is a male "opus" and discover a living, "inconstant" self. She must, in other words, replace the "copy" with the "individuality," as Barrett Browning once said she thought she herself had done in her mature art.[40] Significantly, however, the "copy" selves depicted in Aurora's mother's portrait ultimately represent, once again, the moral extremes of angel ("angel," "fairy," and perhaps "sprite") and monster ("ghost," "witch," "fiend").

In her brilliant and influential analysis of the question "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" the anthropologist Sherry Ortner notes that in every society "the psychic mode associated with women seems to stand at both the bottom and the top of the scale of human modes of relating." Attempting to account for this "symbolic ambiguity," Ortner explains "both the subversive feminine symbols (witches, evil eye, menstrual pollution, castrating mothers) and the feminine symbols of transcendence (mother goddesses, merciful dispensers of salvation, female symbols of justice)" by pointing out that women "can appear from certain points of view to stand both under and over (but really simply outside of) the sphere of culture's hegemony."[41] That is, precisely because a woman is denied the autonomy—the subjectivity—that the pen represents, she is not only excluded from culture (whose emblem might well be the pen) but she also becomes herself an embodiment of just those extremes of mysterious and intransigent Otherness which culture confronts with worship or fear, love or loathing. As "Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy,

witch, and sprite," she mediates between the male artist and the Unknown, simultaneously teaching him purity and instructing him in degradation. But what of her own artistic growth? Because that growth has for so long been radically qualified by the angel- and monster-imagery the literary woman sees in the looking glass of the male-authored text, some understanding of such imagery is an essential preliminary to any study of literature by women. As Joan Didion recently noted, "writing is an aggression" precisely because it is "an imposition . . . an invasion of someone else's most private space."[42] Like Leo Bersani's observation that an "elasticity of being [is] induced by an immersion in literature," her remark has special significance in this connection. A thorough study of those male constructs which have invaded the "most private space" of countless literate women would require hundreds of pages—indeed, a number of excellent books have been devoted to the subject[43]—but we will attempt here a brief review of the fundamental extremes of angel and monster, in order to demonstrate the severity of the male text's "imposition" upon women.

The ideal woman that male authors dream of generating is always an angel, as Norman O. Brown's comment about Laura/poetry suggested. At the same time, from Virginia Woolf's point of view, the "angel in the house" is the most pernicious image male authors have ever imposed upon literary women. Where and how did this ambiguous image originate, particularly the trivialized Victorian angel in the house that so disturbed Woolf? In the Middle Ages, of course, mankind's great teacher of purity was the Virgin Mary, a mother goddess who perfectly fitted the female role Ortner defines as "merciful dispenser of salvation." For the more secular nineteenth century, however, the eternal type of female purity was represented not by a madonna in heaven but by an angel in the house. Nevertheless, there is a clear line of literary descent from divine Virgin to domestic angel, passing through (among many others) Dante, Milton, and Goethe.

Like most Renaissance neo-Platonists, Dante claimed to know God and His Virgin handmaid by knowing the Virgin's virgin attendant,

Beatrice. Similarly, Milton, despite his undeniable misogyny (which we shall examine later), speaks of having been granted a vision of "my late espoused saint," who

> Came vested all in white, pure as her mind.
> Her face was veiled, yet to my fancied sight,
> Love sweetness goodness, in her person shined
> So clear, as in no face with more delight.

In death, in other words, Milton's human wife has taken on both the celestial brightness of Mary and (since she has been "washed from spot of childbed taint") the virginal purity of Beatrice. In fact, if she could be resurrected in the flesh she might now be an angel in the house, interpreting heaven's luminous mysteries to her wondering husband.

The famous vision of the "Eternal Feminine" (*Das Ewig-Weibliche*) with which Goethe's *Faust* concludes presents women from penitent prostitutes to angelic virgins in just this role of interpreters or intermediaries between the divine Father and his human sons. The German of *Faust's* "Chorus Mysticus" is extraordinarily difficult to translate in verse, but Hans Eichner's English paraphrase easily suggests the ways in which Goethe's image of female intercessors seems almost to be a revision of Milton's "late espoused saint": "All that is transitory is merely symbolical; here (that is to say, in the scene before you) the inaccessible is (symbolically) portrayed and the inexpressible is (symbolically) made manifest. The eternal feminine (i.e. the eternal principle symbolized by woman) draws us to higher spheres." Meditating on the exact nature of this eternal feminine, moreover, Eichner comments that for Goethe the "ideal of contemplative purity" is always feminine while "the ideal of significant action is masculine."[44] Once again, therefore, it is just because women are defined as wholly passive, completely void of generative power (like "Cyphers") that they become numinous to male artists. For in the metaphysical emptiness their "purity" signifies they are, of course, *self-less*, with all the moral and psychological implications that word suggests.

Elaborating further on Goethe's eternal feminine, Eichner gives an example of the culmination of Goethe's "chain of representatives

of the 'noblest femininity'": Makarie, in the late novel *Wilhelm Meister's Travels*. His description of her usefully summarizes the philosophical background of the angel in the house:

> She . . . leads a life of almost pure contemplation. . . . in considerable isolation on a country estate . . . a life without external events—a life whose story cannot be told as there is no story. Her existence is not useless. On the contrary . . . she shines like a beacon in a dark world, like a motionless lighthouse by which others, the travellers whose lives do have a story, can set their course. When those involved in feeling and action turn to her in their need, they are never dismissed without advice and consolation. She is an ideal, a model of selflessness and of purity of heart.[45]

She has no story of her own but gives "advice and consolation" to others, listens, smiles, sympathizes: such characteristics show that Makarie is not only the descendent of Western culture's cloistered virgins but also the direct ancestress of Coventry Patmore's angel in the house, the eponymous heroine of what may have been the middle nineteenth century's most popular book of poems.

Dedicated to "the memory of her by whom and for whom I became a poet," Patmore's *The Angel in the House* is a verse-sequence which hymns the praises and narrates the courtship and marriage of Honoria, one of the three daughters of a country Dean, a girl whose unselfish grace, gentleness, simplicity, and nobility reveal that she is not only a pattern Victorian lady but almost literally an angel on earth. Certainly her spirituality interprets the divine for her poet-husband, so that

> No happier post than this I ask,
> To live her laureate all my life.
> On wings of love uplifted free,
> And by her gentleness made great,
> I'll teach how noble man should be
> To match with such a lovely mate.[46]

Honoria's essential virtue, in other words, is that her virtue makes her *man* "great." In and of herself, she is neither great nor extraordinary. Indeed, Patmore adduces many details to stress the almost pathetic

ordinariness of her life: she picks violets, loses her gloves, feeds her birds, waters her rose plot, and journeys to London on a train with her father the Dean, carrying in her lap a volume of Petrarch borrowed from her lover but entirely ignorant that the book is, as he tells us, "worth its weight in gold." In short, like Goethe's Makarie, Honoria has no story except a sort of anti-story of selfless innocence based on the notion that "Man must be pleased; but him to please / Is woman's pleasure."[47]

Significantly, when the young poet-lover first visits the Deanery where his Honoria awaits him like Sleeping Beauty or Snow White, one of her sisters asks him if, since leaving Cambridge, he has "outgrown" Kant and Goethe. But if his paean of praise to the *Ewig-Weibliche* in rural England suggests that he has not, at any rate, outgrown the latter of these, that is because for Victorian men of letters Goethe represented not collegiate immaturity but moral maturity. After all, the climactic words of *Sartor Resartus*, that most influential masterpiece of Victorian sagacity, were "Close thy *Byron;* open thy *Goethe*,"[48] and though Carlyle was not specifically thinking of what came to be called "the woman question," his canonization of Goethe meant, among other things, a new emphasis on the eternal feminine, the angel woman Patmore describes in his verses, Aurora Leigh perceives in her mother's picture, and Virginia Woolf shudders to remember.

Of course, from the eighteenth century on, conduct books for ladies had proliferated, enjoining young girls to submissiveness, modesty, self-lessness; reminding all women that they should be angelic. There is a long and crowded road from *The Booke of Curtesye* (1477) to the columns of "Dear Abby," but social historians have fully explored its part in the creation of those "eternal feminine" virtues of modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, civility, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness—all of which are modes of mannerliness that contributed to Honoria's angelic innocence. Ladies were assured by the writers of such conduct books that "There are Rules for all our Actions, even down to Sleeping with a good Grace," and they were told that this good Grace was a woman's duty to her husband because "if Woman owes her Being to the Comfort and Profit of man, 'tis highly reasonable that she should be careful and diligent to content and please him."[49]

The arts of pleasing men, in other words, are not only angelic characteristics; in more worldly terms, they are the proper acts of a lady. "What shall I do to gratify myself or to be admired?" is not the question a lady asks on arising, declared Mrs. Sarah Ellis, Victorian England's foremost preceptress of female morals and manners, in 1844. No, because she is "the least engaged of any member of the household," a woman of right feeling should devote herself to the good of others.[50] And she should do this silently, without calling attention to her exertions because "all that would tend to draw away her thoughts from others and fix them on herself, ought to be avoided as an evil to her."[51] Similarly, John Ruskin affirmed in 1865 that the woman's "power is not for rule, not for battle, and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet orderings" of domesticity.[52] Plainly, both writers meant that, enshrined within her home, a Victorian angel-woman should become her husband's holy refuge from the blood and sweat that inevitably accompanies a "life of significant action," as well as, in her "contemplative purity," a living *memento* of the otherness of the divine.

At times, however, in the severity of her selflessness, as well as in the extremity of her alienation from ordinary fleshly life, this nineteenth-century angel-woman becomes not just a memento of otherness but actually a *memento mori* or, as Alexander Welsh has noted, an "Angel of Death." Discussing Dickens's heroines in particular and what he calls Victorian "angelology" in general, Welsh analyzes the ways in which a spiritualized heroine like Florence Dombey "assists in the translation of the dying to a future state," not only by officiating at the sickbed but also by maternally welcoming the sufferer "from the other side of death."[53] But if the angel-woman in some curious way simultaneously inhabits both this world and the next, then there is a sense in which, besides ministering to the dying, she is herself already dead. Welsh muses on "the apparent reversibility of the heroine's role, whereby the acts of dying and of saving someone from death seem confused," and he points out that Dickens actually describes Florence Dombey as having the unearthly serenity of one who is dead.[54] A spiritual messenger, an interpreter of mysteries to wondering and devoted men, the *Ewig-Weibliche* angel becomes, finally, a messenger of the mystical otherness of death.

As Ann Douglas has recently shown, the nineteenth-century cult

of such death-angels as Harriet Beecher Stowe's little Eva or Dickens's little Nell resulted in a veritable "domestication of death," producing both a conventionalized iconography and a stylized hagiography of dying women and children.[55] Like Dickens's dead-alive Florence Dombey, for instance, Louisa May Alcott's dying Beth March is a household saint, and the deathbed at which she surrenders herself to heaven is the ultimate shrine of the angel-woman's mysteries. At the same time, moreover, the aesthetic cult of ladylike fragility and delicate beauty—no doubt associated with the moral cult of the angel-woman—obliged "genteel" women to "kill" themselves (as Lederer observed) into art objects: slim, pale, passive beings whose "charms" eerily recalled the snowy, porcelain immobility of the dead. Tight-lacing, fasting, vinegar-drinking, and similar cosmetic or dietary excesses were all parts of a physical regimen that helped women either to feign morbid weakness or actually to "decline" into real illness. Beth March's beautiful ladylike sister Amy is thus, in her artful way, as pale and frail as her consumptive sibling, and together these two heroines constitute complementary halves of the emblematic "beautiful woman" whose *death*, thought Edgar Allan Poe, "is unquestionably the most poetical topic in the world."[56]

Whether she becomes an *objet d'art* or a saint, however, it is the surrender of her self—of her personal comfort, her personal desires, or both—that is the beautiful angel-woman's key act, while it is precisely this sacrifice which dooms her both to death and to heaven. For to be selfless is not only to be noble, it is to be dead. A life that has no story, like the life of Goethe's Makarie, is really a life of death, a death-in-life. The ideal of "contemplative purity" evokes, finally, both heaven and the grave. To return to Aurora Leigh's catalogue, then—her vision of "Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch, and sprite" in her mother's portrait—there is a sense in which as a celestial "angel" Aurora's mother is also a somewhat sinister "ghost," because she wears the face of the spiritualized Victorian woman who, having died to her own desires, her own self, her own life, leads a posthumous existence in her own lifetime.

As Douglas reminds us too, though, the Victorian domestication of death represents not just an acquiescence in death by the selfless, but also a secret striving for power by the powerless. "The tombstone," she notes, "is the sacred emblem in the cult of the overlooked."[57]

Exorcised from public life, denied the pleasures (though not the pains) of sensual existence, the Victorian angel in the house was allowed to hold sway over at least one realm beyond her own household: the kingdom of the dead. But if, as nurse and comforter, spirit-guide and mystical messenger, a woman ruled the dying and the dead, might not even her admirers sometimes fear that, besides dying or easing death, she could *bring* death? As Welsh puts it, "the power of an angel to save implies, even while it denies, the power of death." Speaking of angelic Agnes Wickfield (in *David Copperfield*), he adds a sinister but witty question: "Who, in the language of detective fiction, was the last person to see Dora Copperfield alive?"[58]

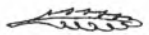
Neither Welsh nor Dickens does more than hint at the angel-woman's pernicious potential. But in this context a word to the wise is enough, for such a hint helps explain the fluid metamorphoses that the figure of Aurora's mother undergoes. Her images of "Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch and sprite," we begin to see, are inextricably linked, one to another, each to its opposite. Certainly, imprisoned in the coffinlike shape of a death angel, a woman might long demonically for escape. In addition, if as death angel the woman suggests a providentially selfless mother, delivering the male soul from one realm to another, the same woman's maternal power implies, too, the fearful bondage of mortality into which every mother delivers her children. Finally, the fact that the angel woman manipulates her domestic/mystical sphere in order to ensure the well-being of those entrusted to her care reveals that she *can* manipulate; she can scheme; she can plot—stories as well as strategies.

The Victorian angel's scheming, her mortal fleshliness, and her repressed (but therefore all the more frightening) capacity for explosive rage are often subtly acknowledged, even in the most glowing texts of male "angelographers." Patmore's Honoria, for instance, proves to be considerably more duplicitous than at first she seemed. "To the sweet folly of the dove," her poet-lover admits, "She joins the cunning of the snake." To be sure, the speaker shows that her wiliness is exercised in a "good" cause: "to rivet and exalt his love." Nevertheless,

> Her mode of candour is deceit;
> And what she thinks from what she'll say
> (Although I'll never call her cheat)
> Lies far as Scotland from Cathay.[59]

Clearly, the poet is here acknowledging his beloved's potential for what Austen's Captain Harville called "inconstancy"—that is, her stubborn autonomy and unknowable subjectivity, meaning the ineradicable selfishness that underlies even her angelic renunciation of self.

Similarly, exploring analogous tensions between flesh and spirit in yet another version of the angel-woman, Dante Gabriel Rossetti places his "Blessed Damozel" behind "golden barriers" in heaven, but then observes that she is still humanly embodied. The bars she leans on are oddly warm; her voice, her hair, her tears are weirdly real and sensual, perhaps to emphasize the impossibility of complete spirituality for any woman. This "damozel's" life-in-death, at any rate, is still in some sense physical and therefore (paradoxically) emblematic of mortality. But though Rossetti wrote "The Blessed Damozel" in 1846, sixteen years before the suicide of his wife and model Elizabeth Siddal, the secret anxieties such imagery expressed came to the surface long after Lizzie's death. In 1869, to retrieve a poetry manuscript he had sentimentally buried with this beloved woman whose face "fill[ed] his dreams"—buried as if woman and artwork were necessarily inseparable—Rossetti had Lizzie's coffin exhumed, and literary London buzzed with rumors that her hair had "continued to grow after her death, to grow so long, so beautiful, so luxuriantly as to fill the coffin with its gold!"[60] As if symbolizing the indomitable earthliness that no woman, however angelic, could entirely renounce, Lizzie Siddal Rossetti's hair leaps like a metaphor for monstrous female sexual energies from the literal and figurative coffins in which her artist-husband enclosed her. To Rossetti, its assertive radiance made the dead Lizzie seem both terrifyingly physical and fiercely supernatural. "'Mid change the changeless night environeth, / Lies all that golden hair undimmed in death," he wrote.[61]



If we define a woman like Rossetti's dead wife as indomitably earthly yet somehow supernatural, we are defining her as a witch or

monster, a magical creature of the lower world who is a kind of antithetical mirror image of an angel. As such, she still stands, in Sherry Ortner's words, "both under and over (but really simply outside of) the sphere of culture's hegemony." But now, as a representative of otherness, she incarnates the damning otherness of the flesh rather than the inspiring otherness of the spirit, expressing what—to use Anne Finch's words—men consider her own "presumptuous" desires rather than the angelic humility and "dullness" for which she was designed. Indeed, if we return to the literary definitions of "authority" with which we began this discussion, we will see that the monster-woman, threatening to replace her angelic sister, embodies intransigent female autonomy and thus represents both the author's power to allay "his" anxieties by calling their source bad names (witch, bitch, fiend, monster) and, simultaneously, the mysterious power of the character who refuses to stay in her textually ordained "place" and thus generates a story that "gets away" from its author.

Because, as Dorothy Dinnerstein has proposed, male anxieties about female autonomy probably go as deep as everyone's mother-dominated infancy, patriarchal texts have traditionally suggested that every angelically selfless Snow White must be hunted, if not haunted, by a wickedly assertive Stepmother: for every glowing portrait of submissive women enshrined in domesticity, there exists an equally important negative image that embodies the sacrilegious fiendishness of what William Blake called the "Female Will." Thus, while male writers traditionally praise the simplicity of the dove, they invariably castigate the cunning of the serpent—at least when that cunning is exercised in her own behalf. Similarly, assertiveness, aggressiveness—all characteristics of a male life of "significant action"—are "monstrous" in women precisely because "unfeminine" and therefore unsuited to a gentle life of "contemplative purity." Musing on "The Daughter of Eve," Patmore's poet-speaker remarks, significantly, that

> The woman's gentle mood o'erstept
> Withers my love, that lightly scans
> The rest, and does in her accept
> All her own faults, but none of man's.[62]

Luckily, his Honoria has no such vicious defects; her serpentine cunning, as we noted earlier, is concentrated entirely on pleasing her lover. But repeatedly, throughout most male literature, a sweet heroine inside the house (like Honoria) is opposed to a vicious bitch outside.

Behind Thackeray's angelically submissive Amelia Sedley, for instance—an Honoria whose career is traced in gloomier detail than that of Patmore's angel—lurks *Vanity Fair*'s stubbornly autonomous Becky Sharp, an independent "charmer" whom the novelist at one point actually describes as a monstrous and snaky sorceress:

> In describing this siren, singing and smiling, coaxing and cajoling, the author, with modest pride, asks his readers all around, has he once forgotten the laws of politeness, and showed the monster's hideous tail above water? No! Those who like may peep down under waves that are pretty transparent, and see it writhing and twirling, diabolically hideous and slimy, flapping amongst bones, or curling around corpses; but above the water line, I ask, has not everything been proper, agreeable, and decorous. . . .[63]

As this extraordinary passage suggests, the monster may not only be concealed *behind* the angel, she may actually turn out to reside *within* (or in the lower half of) the angel. Thus, Thackeray implies, every angel in the house—"proper, agreeable, and decorous," "coaxing and cajoling" hapless men—is really, perhaps, a monster, "diabolically hideous and slimy."

"A woman in the shape of a monster," Adrienne Rich observes in "Planetarium," "a monster in the shape of a woman / the skies are full of them."[64] Because the skies *are* full of them, even if we focus only on those female monsters who are directly related to Thackeray's serpentine siren, we will find that such monsters have long inhabited male texts. Emblems of filthy materiality, committed only to their own private ends, these women are accidents of nature, deformities meant to repel, but in their very freakishness they possess unhealthy energies, powerful and dangerous arts. Moreover, to the extent that they incarnate male dread of women and, specifically, male scorn of female creativity, such characters have drastically affected the

self-images of women writers, negatively reinforcing those messages of submissiveness conveyed by their angelic sisters.

The first book of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* introduces a female monster who serves as a prototype of the entire line. *Errour* is half woman, half serpent, "Most lothsom, filthie, foule, and full of vile disdaine" (1.1.126). She breeds in a dark den where her young suck on her poisonous dugs or creep back into her mouth at the sight of hated light, and in battle against the noble Red-crosse Knight, she spews out a flood of books and papers, frogs and toads. Symbolizing the dangerous effect of misdirected and undigested learning, her filthiness adumbrates that of two other powerful females in book 1, Duessa and Lucifera. But because these other women can create false appearances to hide their vile natures, they are even more dangerous.

Like Errour, Duessa is deformed below the waist, as if to foreshadow *Lear*'s "But to the girdle do the Gods inherit, Beneath is all the fiend's." When, like all witches, she must do penance at the time of the new moon by bathing with herbs traditionally used by such other witches as Scylla, Circe, and Medea, her "neather parts" are revealed as "misshapen, monstruous."[65] But significantly, Duessa deceives and ensnares men by assuming the shape of Una, the beautiful and angelic heroine who represents Christianity, charity, docility. Similarly, Lucifera lives in what seems to be a lovely mansion, a cunningly constructed House of Pride whose weak foundation and ruinous rear quarters are carefully concealed. Both women use their arts of deception to entrap and destroy men, and the secret, shameful ugliness of both is closely associated with their hidden genitals—that is, with their femaleness.

Descending from Patristic misogynists like Tertullian and St. Augustine through Renaissance and Restoration literature—through Sidney's Cecropia, Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth and his Goneril and Regan, Milton's Sin (and even, as we shall see, his Eve)—the female monster populates the works of the satirists of the eighteenth century, a company of male artists whose virulent visions must have been particularly alarming to feminine readers in an age when women had just begun to "attempt the pen." These authors attacked literary women on two fronts. First, and most obviously, through the construction of cartoon figures like Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop and

Fielding's Mrs. Slipslop, and Smollett's Tabitha Bramble, they implied that language itself was almost literally alien to the female tongue. In the mouths of women, vocabulary loses meaning, sentences dissolve, literary messages are distorted or destroyed. At the same time, more subtly but perhaps for that reason even more significantly, such authors devised elaborate anti-romances to show that the female "angel" was really a female "fiend," the ladylike paragon really an unladylike monster. Thus while the "Bluestocking" Anne Finch would find herself directly caricatured (as she was by Pope and Gay) as a character afflicted with the "poetical Itch" like Phoebe Clinket in *Three Hours After Marriage*,[66] she might well feel herself to be indirectly but even more profoundly attacked by Johnson's famous observation that a woman preacher was like a dog standing on its hind legs, or by the suggestion—embedded in works by Swift, Pope, Gay, and others—that *all* women were inexorably and inescapably monstrous, in the flesh as well as in the spirit. Finally, in a comment like Horace Walpole's remark that Mary Wollstonecraft was "a hyena in petticoats," the two kinds of misogynistic attacks definitively merged.[67]

It is significant, then, that Jonathan Swift's disgust with the monstrous females who populate so many of his verses seems to have been caused specifically by the inexorable failure of female art. Like disgusted Gulliver, who returns to England only to prefer the stable to the parlor, his horses to his wife, Swift projects his horror of time, his dread of physicality, on to another stinking creature—the degenerate woman. Probably the most famous instance of this projection occurs in his so-called dirty poems. In these works, we peer behind the facade of the angel woman to discover that, say, the idealized "Caelia, Caelia, Caelia, shits!" We discover that the seemingly unblemished Chloe must "either void or burst," and that the female "inner space" of the "Queen of Love" is like a foul chamber pot.[68] Though some critics have suggested that the misogyny implied by Swift's characterizations of these women is merely ironic, what emerges from his most furious poems in this vein is a horror of female flesh and a revulsion at the inability—the powerlessness—of female arts to redeem or to transform the flesh. Thus for Swift female sexuality is consistently equated with degeneration, disease, and death, while female arts are trivial attempts to forestall an inevitable end.

Significantly, as if defining the tradition of duplicity in which even Patmore's uxorious speaker placed his heroine, Swift devotes many poems to an examination of the role deception plays in the creation of a saving but inadequate fiction of femininity. In "A Beautiful Young Nymph," a battered prostitute removes her wig, her crystal eye, her teeth, and her padding at bedtime, so that the next morning she must employ all her "Arts" to reconstruct her "scatter'd Parts."[69] Such as they are, however, her arts only contribute to her own suffering or that of others, and the same thing is true of Diana in "The Progress of Beauty," who awakes as a mingled mass of dirt and sweat, with cracked lips, foul teeth, and gummy eyes, to spend four hours artfully reconstructing herself. Because she is inexorably rotting away, however, Swift declares that eventually all forms will fail, for "Art no longer can prevayl / When the Materialls all are gone."[70] The strategies of Chloe, Caelia, Corinna, and Diana—artists manqué all—have no success, Swift shows, except in temporarily staving off dissolution, for like Pope's "Sex of Queens," Swift's females are composed of what Pope called "Matter too soft," and their arts are thus always inadequate.[71]

No wonder, then, that the Augustan satirist attacks the female scribbler so virulently, reinforcing Anne Finch's doleful sense that for a woman to attempt the pen is monstrous and "presumptuous," for she is "to be dull / Expected and dessigned." At least in part reflecting male artists' anxieties about the adequacy of their *own* arts, female writers are maligned as failures in eighteenth-century satire precisely because they cannot transcend their female bodily limitations: they cannot *conceive* of themselves in any but reproductive terms. Poor Phoebe Clinket, for instance, is both a caricature of Finch herself and a prototype of the female dunce who proves that literary creativity in women is merely the result of sexual frustration. Lovingly nurturing the unworthy "issue" of her muse because it attests to the "Fertility and Readiness" of her imagination, Phoebe is as sensual and indiscriminate in her poetic strainings as Lady Townley is in her insatiable erotic longings.[72] Like mothers of illegitimate or misshapen offspring, female writers are not producing what they ought, the satirists declare, so that a loose lady novelist is, appropriately enough, the first prize in *The Dunciad*'s urinary contest, while a chamberpot is awarded to the runner-up.

For the most part, eighteenth-century satirists limited their depiction of the female monster to low mimetic equivalents like Phoebe Clinket or Swift's corroding coquettes. But there were several important avatars of the monster woman who retained the allegorical anatomy of their more fantastic precursors. In *The Battle of the Books*, for instance, Swift's "Goddess Criticism" clearly symbolizes the demise of wit and learning. Devouring numberless volumes in a den as dark as Errour's, she is surrounded by relatives like Ignorance, Pride, Opinion, Noise, Impudence, and Pedantry, and she herself is as allegorically deformed as any of Spenser's females.

> The Goddess herself had claws like a Cat; her Head, and Ears, and Voice, resembled those of an Ass; Her Teeth fallen out before; Her Eyes turned inward, as if she lookt only upon Herself; Her diet was the overflowing of her own Gall: Her Spleen was so large, as to stand prominent like a Dug of the first Rate, nor wanted Excrescencies in forms of Teats, at which a Crew of ugly Monsters were greedily sucking; and what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of Spleen increased faster than the Sucking could diminish it.[73]

Like Spenser's Errour and Milton's Sin, Criticism is linked by her processes of eternal breeding, eating, spewing, feeding, and redevouring to biological cycles all three poets view as destructive to transcendent, intellectual life. More, since all the creations of each monstrous mother are her excretions, and since all her excretions are both her food and her weaponry, each mother forms with her brood a self-enclosed system, cannibalistic and solipsistic: the creativity of the world made flesh is annihilating. At the same time, Swift's spleen-producing and splenetic Goddess cannot be far removed from the Goddess of Spleen in Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, and—because she is a mother Goddess—she also has much in common with the Goddess of Dullness who appears in Pope's *Dunciad*. The parent of "Vapours and Female Wit," the "*Hysteric* or *Poetic* fit," the Queen of Spleen rules over all women between the ages of fifteen and fifty, and thus, as a sort of patroness of the female sexual cycle, she is associated with the same anti-creation that characterizes Errour, Sin, and Criticism.[74] Similarly, the Goddess of Dullness, a nursing mother worshipped by a society of dunces, symbolizes the failure of

culture, the failure of art, and the death of the satirist. The huge daughter of Chaos and Night, she rocks the laureate in her ample lap while handing out rewards and intoxicating drinks to her dull sons. A Queen of Ooze, whose inertia comments on idealized Queens of Love, she nods and all of Nature falls asleep, its light destroyed by the stupor that spreads throughout the land in the milk of her "kindness."[75]

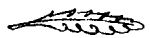
In all these incarnations—from Errour to Dullness, from Goneril and Regan to Chloe and Caelia—the female monster is a striking illustration of Simone de Beauvoir's thesis that woman has been made to represent all of man's ambivalent feelings about his own inability to control his own physical existence, his own birth and death. As the Other, woman comes to represent the contingency of life, life that is made to be destroyed. "It is the horror of his own carnal contingence," de Beauvoir notes, "which [man] projects upon [woman]."[76] In addition, as Karen Horney and Dorothy Dinnerstein have shown, male dread of women, and specifically the infantile dread of maternal autonomy, has historically objectified itself in vilification of women, while male ambivalence about female "charms" underlies the traditional images of such terrible sorceress-goddesses as the Sphinx, Medusa, Circe, Kali, Delilah, and Salome, all of whom possess duplicitous arts that allow them both to seduce and to steal male generative energy.[77]

The sexual nausea associated with all these monster women helps explain why so many real women have for so long expressed loathing of (or at least anxiety about) their own, inexorably female bodies. The "killing" of oneself into an art object—the pruning and preening, the mirror madness, and concern with odors and aging, with hair which is invariably too curly or too lank, with bodies too thin or too thick—all this testifies to the efforts women have expended not just trying to be angels but trying *not* to become female monsters. More significantly for our purposes, however, the female freak is and has been a powerfully coercive and monitory image for women secretly desiring to attempt the pen, an image that helped enforce the injunctions to silence implicit also in the concept of the *Ewig-Weibliche*. If becoming an *author* meant mistaking one's "sex and way," if it meant becoming an "unsexed" or perversely sexed female, then it meant becoming a monster or freak, a vile Errour, a grotesque

Lady Macbeth, a disgusting goddess of Dullness, or (to name a few later witches) a murderous Lamia, a sinister Geraldine. Perhaps, then, the "presumptuous" effort should not be made at all. Certainly the story of Lilith, one more monster woman—indeed, according to Hebrew mythology, both the first woman *and* the first monster—specifically connects poetic presumption with madness, freakishness, monstrosity.

Created not from Adam's rib but, like him, from the dust, Lilith was Adam's first wife, according to apocryphal Jewish lore. Because she considered herself his equal, she objected to lying beneath him, so that when he tried to force her submission, she became enraged and, speaking the Ineffable Name, flew away to the edge of the Red Sea to reside with demons. Threatened by God's angelic emissaries, told that she must return or daily lose a hundred of her demon children to death, Lilith preferred punishment to patriarchal marriage, and she took her revenge against both God and Adam by injuring babies—especially male babies, who were traditionally thought to be more vulnerable to her attacks. What her history suggests is that in patriarchal culture, female speech and female "presumption"—that is, angry revolt against male domination—are inextricably linked and inevitably daemonic. Excluded from the human community, even from the semidivine communal chronicles of the Bible, the figure of Lilith represents the price women have been told they must pay for attempting to define themselves. And it is a terrible price: cursed both because she is a character who "got away" and because she dared to usurp the essentially literary authority implied by the act of naming, Lilith is locked into a vengeance (child-killing) which can only bring her more suffering (the killing of her own children). And even the nature of her one-woman revolution emphasizes her helplessness and her isolation, for her protest takes the form of a refusal and a departure, a flight of escape rather than an active rebellion like, say, Satan's. As a paradigm of both the "witch" and the "fiend" of Aurora Leigh's "Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch and sprite," Lilith reveals, then, just how difficult it is for women even to attempt the pen. And from George MacDonald, the Victorian fantasist who portrayed her in his astonishing *Lilith* as a paradigm of the self-tormenting assertive woman, to Laura Riding, who depicted her in "Eve's Side of It" as an archetypal woman Creator,

the problem Lilith represents has been associated with the problems of female authorship and female authority.[78] Even if they had not studied her legend, literary women like Anne Finch, bemoaning the double bind in which the mutually dependent images of angel and monster had left them, must have gotten the message Lilith incarnates: a life of feminine submission, of "contemplative purity," is a life of silence, a life that has no pen and no story, while a life of female rebellion, of "significant action," is a life that must be silenced, a life whose monstrous pen tells a terrible story. Either way, the images on the surface of the looking glass, into which the female artist peers in search of her *self*, warn her that she is or must be a "Cypher," framed and framed up, indited and indicted.



As the legend of Lilith shows, and as psychoanalysts from Freud and Jung onward have observed, myths and fairy tales often both state and enforce culture's sentences with greater accuracy than more sophisticated literary texts. If Lilith's story summarizes the genesis of the female monster in a single useful parable, the Grimm tale of "Little Snow White" dramatizes the essential but equivocal relationship between the angel-woman and the monster-woman, a relationship that is also implicit in Aurora Leigh's bewildered speculations about her dead mother. "Little Snow White," which Walt Disney entitled "Snow White and the Seven Dwarves," should really be called Snow White and Her Wicked Stepmother, for the central action of the tale—indeed, its only real action—arises from the relationship between these two women: the one fair, young, pale, the other just as fair, but older, fiercer; the one a daughter, the other a mother; the one sweet, ignorant, passive, the other both artful and active; the one a sort of angel, the other an undeniable witch.

Significantly, the conflict between these two women is fought out largely in the transparent enclosures into which, like all the other images of women we have been discussing here, both have been locked: a magic looking glass, an enchanted and enchanting glass coffin. Here, wielding as weapons the tools patriarchy suggests that women use to kill themselves into art, the two women literally try to kill each other with art. Shadow fights shadow, image destroys

image in the crystal prison, as if the "fiend" of Aurora's mother's portrait should plot to destroy the "angel" who is another one of her selves.

The story begins in midwinter, with a Queen sitting and sewing, framed by a window. As in so many fairy tales, she pricks her finger, bleeds, and is thereby assumed into the cycle of sexuality William Blake called the realm of "generation," giving birth "soon after" to a daughter "as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as the wood of the window frame."[79] All the motifs introduced in this prefatory first paragraph—sewing, snow, blood, enclosure—are associated with key themes in female lives (hence in female writing), and they are thus themes we shall be studying throughout this book. But for our purposes here the tale's opening *is* merely prefatory. The real story begins when the Queen, having become a mother, metamorphoses also into a witch—that is, into a wicked "step" mother: " . . . when the child was born, the Queen died," and "After a year had passed the King took to himself another wife."

When we first encounter this "new" wife, she is framed in a magic looking glass, just as her predecessor—that is, her earlier self—had been framed in a window. To be caught and trapped in a mirror rather than a window, however, is to be driven inward, obsessively studying self-images as if seeking a viable self. The first Queen seems still to have had prospects; not yet fallen into sexuality, she looked outward, if only upon the snow. The second Queen is doomed to the inward search that psychoanalysts like Bruno Bettelheim censoriously define as "narcissism,"[80] but which (as Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's "The Other Side of the Mirror" suggested) is necessitated by a state from which all outward prospects have been removed.

That outward prospects *have* been removed—or lost or dissolved away—is suggested not only by the Queen's mirror obsession but by the absence of the King from the story as it is related in the Grimm version. The Queen's husband and Snow White's father (for whose attentions, according to Bettelheim, the two women are battling in a feminized Oedipal struggle) never actually appears in this story at all, a fact that emphasizes the almost stifling intensity with which the tale concentrates on the conflict in the mirror between mother and daughter, woman and woman, self and self. At the same time, though, there is clearly at least one way in which the King *is* present.

His, surely, is the voice of the looking glass, the patriarchal voice of judgment that rules the Queen's—and every woman's—self-evaluation. He it is who decides, first, that his consort is "the fairest of all," and then, as she becomes maddened, rebellious, witchlike, that she must be replaced by his angelically innocent and dutiful daughter, a girl who is therefore defined as "more beautiful still" than the Queen. To the extent, then, that the King, and only the King, constituted the first Queen's prospects, he need no longer appear in the story because, having assimilated the meaning of her own sexuality (and having, thus, become the second Queen) the woman has internalized the King's rules: his voice resides now in her own mirror, her own mind.

But if Snow White is "really" the daughter of the second as well as of the first Queen (i.e., if the two Queens are identical), why does the Queen hate her so much? The traditional explanation—that the mother is as threatened by her daughter's "budding sexuality" as the daughter is by the mother's "possession" of the father—is helpful but does not seem entirely adequate, considering the depth and ferocity of the Queen's rage. It is true, of course, that in the patriarchal Kingdom of the text these women inhabit, the Queen's life can be literally imperiled by her daughter's beauty, and true (as we shall see throughout this study) that, given the female vulnerability such perils imply, female bonding is extraordinarily difficult in patriarchy: women almost inevitably turn against women because the voice of the looking glass sets them against each other. But, beyond all this, it seems as if there is a sense in which the intense desperation with which the Queen enacts her rituals of self-absorption causes (or is caused by) her hatred of Snow White. Innocent, passive, and self-lessly free of the mirror madness that consumes the Queen, Snow White represents the ideal of renunciation that the Queen has already renounced at the beginning of the story. Thus Snow White is destined to replace the Queen *because* the Queen hates her, rather than vice versa. The Queen's hatred of Snow White, in other words, exists before the looking glass has provided an obvious reason for hatred.

For the Queen, as we come to see more clearly in the course of the story, is a plotter, a plot-maker, a schemer, a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty,

wily, and self-absorbed as all artists traditionally are. On the other hand, in her absolute chastity, her frozen innocence, her sweet nullity, Snow White represents precisely the ideal of "contemplative purity" we have already discussed, an ideal that could quite literally kill the Queen. An angel in the house of myth, Snow White is not only a child but (as female angels always are) childlike, docile, submissive, the heroine of a life that *has no story*. But the Queen, adult and demonic, plainly wants a life of "significant action," by definition an "unfeminine" life of stories and story-telling. And therefore, to the extent that Snow White, as her daughter, is a part of herself, she wants to kill the Snow White *in herself*, the angel who would keep deeds and dramas out of her own house.

The first death plot the Queen invents is a naively straightforward murder story: she commands one of her huntsmen to kill Snow White. But, as Bruno Bettelheim has shown, the huntsman is really a surrogate for the King, a parental—or, more specifically, patriarchal—figure "who dominates, controls, and subdues wild ferocious beasts" and who thus "represents the subjugation of the animal, asocial, violent tendencies in man."[81] In a sense, then, the Queen has foolishly asked her patriarchal master to act for her in doing the subversive deed she wants to do in part to retain power over him and in part to steal his power from him. Obviously, he will not do this. As patriarchy's angelic daughter, Snow White is, after all, *his* child, and he must save her, not kill her. Hence he kills a wild boar in her stead, and brings its lung and liver to the Queen as proof that he has murdered the child. Thinking that she is devouring her ice-pure enemy, therefore, the Queen consumes, instead, the wild boar's organs; that is, symbolically speaking, she devours her own beastly rage, and becomes (of course) even more enraged.

When she learns that her first plot has failed, then, the Queen's story-telling becomes angrier as well as more inventive, more sophisticated, more subversive. Significantly, each of the three "tales" she tells—that is, each of the three plots she invents—depends on a poisonous or parodic use of a distinctively female device as a murder weapon, and in each case she reinforces the sardonic commentary on "femininity" that such weaponry makes by impersonating a "wise" woman, a "good" mother, or, as Ellen Moers would put it, an "educating heroine."[82] As a "kind" old pedlar woman, she

offers to lace Snow White "properly" for once—then suffocates her with a very Victorian set of tight laces. As another wise old expert in female beauty, she promises to comb Snow White's hair "properly," then assaults her with a poisonous comb. Finally, as a wholesome farmer's wife, she gives Snow White a "very poisonous apple," which she has made in "a quite secret, lonely room, where no one ever came." The girl finally falls, killed, so it seems, by the female arts of cosmetology and cookery. Paradoxically, however, even though the Queen has been using such feminine wiles as the sirens' comb and Eve's apple subversively, to destroy angelic Snow White so that she (the Queen) can assert and aggrandize herself, these arts have had on her daughter an opposite effect from those she intended. Strengthening the chaste maiden in her passivity, they have made her into precisely the eternally beautiful, inanimate *objet d'art* patriarchal aesthetics want a girl to be. From the point of view of the mad, self-assertive Queen, conventional female arts *kill*. But from the point of view of the docile and selfless princess, such arts, even while they kill, confer the only measure of power available to a woman in a patriarchal culture.

Certainly when the kindly huntsman-father saved her life by abandoning her in the forest at the edge of his kingdom, Snow White discovered her own powerlessness. Though she had been allowed to live because she was a "good" girl, she had to find her own devious way of resisting the onslaughts of the maddened Queen, both inside and outside her self. In this connection, the seven dwarves probably represent her own dwarfed powers, her stunted selfhood, for, as Bettelheim points out, they can do little to help save the girl from the Queen. At the same time, however, her life with them is an important part of her education in submissive femininity, for in serving them she learns essential lessons of service, of selflessness, of domesticity. Finally, that at this point Snow White is a housekeeping angel in a *tiny* house conveys the story's attitude toward "woman's world and woman's work": the realm of domesticity is a miniaturized kingdom in which the best of women is not only like a dwarf but like a dwarf's servant.

Does the irony and bitterness consequent upon such a perception lead to Snow White's few small acts of disobedience? Or would Snow White ultimately have rebelled anyway, precisely because she

is the Queen's true daughter? The story does not, of course, answer such questions, but it does seem to imply them, since its turning point comes from Snow White's significant willingness to be tempted by the Queen's "gifts," despite the dwarves' admonitions. Indeed, the only hint of self-interest that Snow White displays throughout the whole story comes in her "narcissistic" desire for the stay-laces, the comb, and the apple that the disguised murderess offers. As Bettelheim remarks, this "suggests how close the stepmother's temptations are to Snow White's inner desires."[83] Indeed, it suggests that, as we have already noted, the Queen and Snow White are in some sense one: while the Queen struggles to free herself from the passive Snow White in herself, Snow White must struggle to repress the assertive Queen in herself. That both women eat from the same deadly apple in the third temptation episode merely clarifies and dramatizes this point. The Queen's lonely art has enabled her to contrive a two-faced fruit—one white and one red "cheek"—that represents her ambiguous relationship to this angelic girl who is both her daughter and her enemy, her self and her opposite. Her intention is that the girl will die of the apple's poisoned red half—red with her sexual energy, her assertive desire for deeds of blood and triumph—while she herself will be unharmed by the passivity of the white half.

But though at first this seems to have happened, the apple's effect is, finally, of course, quite different. After the Queen's artfulness has killed Snow White into art, the girl becomes if anything even more dangerous to her "step" mother's autonomy than she was before, because even more opposed to it in both mind and body. For, dead and self-less in her glass coffin, she is an object, to be displayed and desired, patriarchy's marble "opus," the decorative and decorous Galatea with whom every ruler would like to grace his parlor. Thus, when the Prince first sees Snow White in her coffin, he begs the dwarves to give "it" to him as a gift, "for I cannot live without seeing Snow White. I will honor and prize her as my dearest possession". An "it," a possession, Snow White has become an idealized image of herself, a woman in a portrait like Aurora Leigh's mother, and as such she has definitively proven herself to be patriarchy's ideal woman, the perfect candidate for Queen. At this point, therefore, she regurgitates the poison apple (whose madness had

stuck in her throat) and rises from her coffin. The fairest in the land, she will marry the most powerful in the land; bidden to their wedding, the egotistically assertive, plotting Queen will become a former Queen, dancing herself to death in red-hot iron shoes.

What does the future hold for Snow White, however? When her Prince becomes a King and she becomes a Queen, what will her life be like? Trained to domesticity by her dwarf instructors, will she sit in the window, gazing out on the wild forest of her past, and sigh, and sew, and prick her finger, and conceive a child white as snow, red as blood, black as ebony wood? Surely, fairest of them all, Snow White has exchanged one glass coffin for another, delivered from the prison where the Queen put her only to be imprisoned in the looking glass from which the King's voice speaks daily. There is, after all, no female model for her in this tale except the "good" (dead) mother and her living avatar the "bad" mother. And if Snow White escaped her first glass coffin by her goodness, her passivity and docility, her only escape from her second glass coffin, the imprisoning mirror, must evidently be through "badness," through plots and stories, duplicitous schemes, wild dreams, fierce fictions, mad impersonations. The cycle of her fate seems inexorable. Renouncing "contemplative purity," she must now embark on that life of "significant action" which, for a woman, is defined as a witch's life because it is so monstrous, so unnatural. Grotesque as Errour, Duessa, Lucifera, she will practice false arts in her secret, lonely room. Suicidal as Lilith and Medea, she will become a murderess bent on the self-slaughter implicit in her murderous attempts against the life of her own child. Finally, in fiery shoes that parody the costumes of femininity as surely as the comb and stays she herself contrived, she will do a silent terrible death-dance out of the story, the looking glass, the transparent coffin of her own image. Her only deed, this death will imply, can be a deed of death, her only action the pernicious action of self-destruction.

In this connection, it seems especially significant that the Queen's dance of death is a silent one. In "The Juniper Tree," a version of "Little Snow White" in which a *boy's* mother tries to kill him (for different reasons, of course) the dead boy is transformed not into a silent art object but into a furious golden bird who sings a song of vengeance against his murderess and finally crushes her to death

with a millstone.[84] The male child's progress toward adulthood is a growth toward both self-assertion and self-articulation, "The Juniper Tree" implies, a development of the *powers* of speech. But the girl child must learn the arts of silence either as herself a silent image invented and defined by the magic looking glass of the male-authored text, or as a silent dancer of her own woes, a dancer who enacts rather than articulates. From the abused Procne to the reclusive Lady of Shallott, therefore, women have been told that their art, like the witch's dance in "Little Snow White," is an art of silence. Procne must record her sufferings with what Geoffrey Hartman calls "the voice of the shuttle" because when she was raped her tongue was cut out.[85] The Lady of Shallott must weave her story because she is imprisoned in a tower as adamantine as any glass coffin, doomed to escape only through the self-annihilating madness of romantic love (just as the Queen is doomed to escape only through the self-annihilating madness of her death dance), and her last work of art is her own dead body floating downstream in a boat. And even when such maddened or grotesque female artists make sounds, they are for the most part, say patriarchal theorists, absurd or grotesque or pitiful. Procne's sister Philomel, for instance, speaks with an unintelligible bird's voice (unlike the voice of the hero of "The Juniper Tree"). And when Gerard Manley Hopkins, with whom we began this meditation on pens and penises and kings and queens, wrote of her in an epigram "On a Poetess," he wrote as follows:

> Miss M. 's a nightingale. 'Tis well
> Your simile I keep.
> It is the way with Philomel
> To sing while others sleep.[86]

Even Matthew Arnold's more sympathetically conceived Philomel speaks "a wild, unquenched, deep-sunken, old-world pain" that arises from the stirrings of a "bewildered brain."[87]

Yet, as Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's yearning toward that sane and serious self concealed on the other side of the mirror suggested —and as Anne Finch's complaint and Anne Elliot's protest told us too—women writers, longing to attempt the pen, have longed to escape from the many-faceted glass coffins of the patriarchal texts whose properties male authors insisted that they are. Reaching a

hand to the stern, self-determining self behind the looking-glass portrait of her mother, reaching past those grotesque and obstructive images of "Ghost, fiend, and angel, fairy, witch, and sprite," Aurora Leigh, like all the women artists whose careers we will trace in this book, tries to excavate the real self buried beneath the "copy" selves. Similarly, Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, staring into a mirror where her own mouth appears as a "hideous wound" bleeding "in silence and in secret," strives for a "voice to speak her dread."

In their attempts at the escape that the female pen offers from the prison of the male text, women like Aurora Leigh and Mary Elizabeth Coleridge begin, as we shall see, by alternately defining themselves as angel-women or as monster-women. Like Snow White and the wicked Queen, their earliest impulses, as we shall also see, are ambivalent. Either they are inclined to immobilize themselves with suffocating tight-laces in the glass coffins of patriarchy, or they are tempted to destroy themselves by doing fiery and suicidal tarantellas out of the looking glass. Yet, despite the obstacles presented by those twin images of angel and monster, despite the fears of sterility and the anxieties of authorship from which women have suffered, generations of texts *have* been possible for female writers. By the end of the eighteenth century—and here is the most important phenomenon we will see throughout this volume—women were not only writing, they were conceiving fictional worlds in which patriarchal images and conventions were severely, radically revised. And as self-conceiving women from Anne Finch and Anne Elliot to Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson rose from the glass coffin of the male-authored text, as they exploded out of the Queen's looking glass, the old silent dance of death became a dance of triumph, a dance into speech, a dance of authority.

2 Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship

The man who does not know sick women does not know women.
—S. Weir Mitchell

I try to describe this long limitation, hoping that with such power as is now mine, and such use of language as is within that power, this will convince any one who cares about it that this "living" of mine had been done under a heavy handicap. . . .
—Charlotte Perkins Gilman

A Word dropped careless on a Page
May stimulate an eye
When folded in perpetual seam
The Wrinkled Maker lie

Infection in the sentence breeds
We may inhale Despair
At distances of Centuries
From the Malaria—
—Emily Dickinson

I stand in the ring
in the dead city
and tie on the red shoes
. . . .
They are not mine,
they are my mother's,
her mother's before,
handed down like an heirloom
but hidden like shameful letters.
—Anne Sexton

What does it mean to be a woman writer in a culture whose fundamental definitions of literary authority are, as we have seen, both

yearning for "Ecstasy—and Dell," for a transfigured universe in which even the most "old-fashioned" little girl can "live aloud." Guarded and disguised as they are, her self-dramatizations tell us this, tell us—as she once remarked to Higginson about his own art—that if her versified autobiography could "cease to be Romance, it would be Revelation, which is the Seed—of Romance—"[11]

Notes

Epigraphs on page vii: George MacDonald, *Lilith* (1895; reprinted New York: Ballantine, 1969), pp. 220–21; Laura (Riding) Jackson, "Eve's Side of It," *Chelsea* 35 (New York, 1976):88–93; first published in *Progress of Stories* (London: Seizin-Constable, 1935).

CHAPTER 1

Epigraphs: "In the End," in *Chelsea* 35:96; "The Introduction," in *The Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea*, ed. Myra Reynolds (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903), pp. 4–5; *The Diary of Anaïs Nin, Vol. Two, 1934–1939*, ed. Gunther Stuhlmann (New York: The Swallow Press and Harcourt, Brace, 1967), p. 233. *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, ed. C. C. Abbott (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 133.

1. Edward W. Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 83.
2. Ibid., p. 162. For an analogous use of such imagery of paternity, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's "Translator's Preface" to Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), p. xi: "to use one of Derrida's structural metaphors, [a preface is] the son or seed . . . caused or engendered by the father (text or meaning)." Also see her discussion of Nietzsche where she considers the "masculine style of possession" in terms of "the stylus, the stiletto, the spurs," p. xxxvi.
3. James Joyce, *Ulysses* (New York: Modern Library, 1934), p. 205.
4. Ibid. The whole of this extraordinarily relevant passage develops this notion further: "Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man," Stephen notes. "It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On that mystery and not on the madonna which the cunning Italian intellect flung to the mob of Europe the church is founded and founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro- and microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood. *Amor matris*, subjective and objective genitive, may be the only true thing in life. Paternity may be a legal fiction" (pp. 204–05).
5. Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, chapter 13. John Ruskin, *Modern Painters*, vol. 2, in *The Works of John Ruskin*, ed. E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: George Allen, 1903), pp. 250–51. Although Virginia Woolf noted in *A Room of One's Own* that Coleridge thought "a great mind is androgynous" she added wryly that "Coleridge certainly did not mean . . . that it is a mind that has any special sympathy with women" (*A Room of One's Own* [New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929], p. 102). Certainly the imaginative power Coleridge describes does not sound "man-womanly" in Woolf's sense.

7 Shelley, "A Defense of Poetry." Keats to John Hamilton Reynolds, 3 February 1818; *The Selected Letters of John Keats*, ed. Lionel Trilling (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 121.

8 See E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), pp. 305, 306. For further commentary on both Curtius's "The Symbolism of the Book" and the "Book of Nature" metaphor itself, see Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, pp. 15–17.

9 "Timon, A Satyr," in *Poems by John Wilmot Earl of Rochester*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953), p. 99.

10 Bridget Riley, "The Hermaphrodite," *Art and Sexual Politics*, ed. Thomas B. Hess and Elizabeth C. Baker (London: Collier Books, 1973), p. 82. Riley comments that she herself would "interpret this remark as expressing his attitude to his work as a celebration of life."

11 Norman O. Brown, *Love's Body* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 134; John T. Irwin, *Doubling and Incest, Repetition and Revenge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 163. Irwin also speaks of "the phallic generative power of the creative imagination" (p. 159).

12 Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp. 11, 26.

13 All references to *Persuasion* are to volume and chapter of the text edited by R. W. Chapman, reprinted with an introduction by David Daiches (New York: Norton, 1958).

14 Anne Finch, *Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea*, pp. 4–5.

15 Southey to Charlotte Brontë, March 1837. Quoted in Winifred Gérin, *Charlotte Brontë: The Evolution of Genius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 110.

16 Finch, *Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea*, p. 100. Otto Weininger, *Sex and Character* (London: Heinemann, 1906), p. 286. This sentence is part of an extraordinary passage in which Weininger asserts that "women have no existence and no essence; they are not, they are nothing," this because "woman has no relation to the idea . . . she is neither moral nor anti-moral," but "all existence is moral and logical existence."

17 Richard Chase speaks of the "masculine *élan*" throughout "The Brontës, or Myth Domesticated," in *Forms of Modern Fiction*, ed. William V. O'Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), pp. 102–13. For a discussion of the "female eunuch" see Germaine Greer, *The Female Eunuch* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1970). See also Anthony Burgess, "The Book Is Not For Reading," *New York Times Book Review*, 4 December 1966, pp. 1, 74, and William Gass on Norman Mailer's *Genius and Lust*, *New York Times Book Review*, 24 October 1976, p. 2. In this connection, finally, it is interesting (and depressing) to consider that Virginia Woolf evidently defined *herself* as "a eunuch." (See Noel Annan, "Virginia Woolf Fever," *New York Review*, 20 April 1978, p. 22.)

18 Rufus Griswold, Preface to *The Female Poets of America* (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1849), p. 8.

19 Roland Barthes, *Sade/Fourier/Loyola*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill & Wang, 1976), p. 182; Hopkins, *Correspondence*, p. 133.

1 Finch, *Poems of Anne Countess of Winchilsea*, p. 5.

2 Luis Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1976), p. 194.

3 Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words*, trans. Bernard Frechtman (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1964), p. 114.

4 Marjorie Grene, *Sartre* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1973), p. 9.

5 Quoted by Cornelia Otis Skinner in her 1952 theater piece, *Paris '90*.

6 Norman O. Brown, "Daphne," in Joseph Campbell, ed., *Mysteries, Dreams, and Religion* (New York: Dutton, 1970), p. 93.

7 Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*, chapter 6, "Humpty Dumpty."

8 Albert Gelpi, "Emily Dickinson and the Deerslayer," in *Shakespeare's Sisters*, ed. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), pp. 122–134.

9 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (New York: Knopf, 1953), p. 58.

10 D. H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent*, chapter 23, "Huitzilopochtli's Night."

11 See Wolfgang Lederer, M. D., *The Fear of Women* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1968); also H. R. Hays, *The Dangerous Sex* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1964); Katharine Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966); and Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976).

12 Lederer, *Fear of Women*, p. 42.

13 Mary Elizabeth Coleridge, "The Other Side of a Mirror," in *Poems by Mary E. Coleridge* (London: Elkin Mathews, 1908), pp. 8–9.

14 See The Wife's Prologue, lines 1–3: "Experience, though noon auctoritee / Were in this world, were right ynough to me / To speke of wo that is in mariage." See also Arlyn Diamond and Lee Edwards, ed., *The Authority of Experience* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1977), an anthology of feminist criticism which draws its title from the Wife's speech.

15 With acknowledgment of a point similar to this, Edward Said follows his definition of "authority" with a definition of an accompanying, integrally related concept of "molestation," by which he says he means "that no novelist has ever been unaware that his authority, regardless of how complete, or the authority of a narrator, is a sham" (*Beginnings*, p. 84). For a fascinating discussion of the way in which one woman was driven to try to defy male literary / patriarchal authority, see Mitchell R. Breitweiser, "Cotton Mather's Crazed Wife," in *Glyph 5*. This woman literally dis-continued her husband's power by "molesting"—blotting and stealing!—his manuscripts.

16 Virginia Woolf, "Professions for Women," *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1942), pp. 236–38.

17 Plath, *Ariel* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 8.

18 Christina Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio," in *New Poems by Christina Rossetti*, ed. William Michael Rossetti (New York: Macmillan, 1896), p. 114.

19 "A Woman's Poem," *Harper's Magazine* (February 1859), p. 340.

20 Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (New York: Crowell, 1891), pp. 3–4.

21 In a letter to John Kenyon in August 1844 Barrett Browning declared that the

difference between her early, derivative poems (like her "Essay on Mind") and her mature work was "not merely the difference between two schools, nor even the difference between immaturity and maturity; but . . . the difference between the dead and the living, between a copy and individuality, between what is myself and what is not myself" (*The Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning*, ed Frederic G. Kenyon [2 vols. in 1, New York: Macmillan, 1899], 1:187).

41 Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in *Woman, Culture, and Society*, ed. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphère (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), p. 86.

42 Susan Braudy, "A Day in the Life of Joan Didion," *Ms.* 5 (8 February 1977):109.

43 See, for instance, Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate*; Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (New York: Avon, 1971).

44 Hans Eichner, "The Eternal Feminine: An Aspect of Goethe's Ethics," in Johann Wolfgang van Goethe, *Faust*, Norton Critical Edition, trans. Walter Arndt, ed. Cyrus Hamlin (New York: Norton, 1976), pp. 616, 617. Significantly, even when talk (rather than silence) is considered specifically feminine, it is "only" talk and not action, as the motto *Fatti maschi, parole femine* implies: Deeds are masculine, words are feminine.

45 Ibid., p. 620. Obviously Makarie's virtues foreshadow (besides those of Patmore's Honoria) those of Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Ramsay, in *To the Lighthouse*, for Mrs. Ramsay is also a kind of "lighthouse" of sympathy and beauty.

46 Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House* (London: George Bell & Son, 1885), p. 17.

47 Ibid., p. 73.

48 "The Everlasting Yea," *Sartor Resartus*, book 2, chap. 9.

49 Abbé d'Ancourt, *The Lady's Preceptor* (3rd ed. London: J. Walts, 1745), p. 8.

50 Mrs. Sarah Ellis, *The Women of England* (New York, 1844), pp. 9–10.

51 Mrs. Ellis, *The Family Monitor and Domestic Guide* (New York: Henry G. Langley, 1844), p. 35.

52 John Ruskin, "Of Queens' Gardens," *Sesame and Lilies* (New York: Charles E. Merrill, 1899), p. 23.

53 Alexander Welsh, *The City of Dickens* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 184.

54 Ibid., pp. 187, 190.

55 Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1977), "The Domestication of Death," pp. 200–26.

56 "The Philosophy of Composition," *The Complete Poems and Stories of Edgar Allan Poe, with Selections from his Critical Writings*, ed. A. H. Quinn (New York: Knopf, 1951), 2:982.

57 Douglas, *Feminization of American Culture*, p. 202.

58 Welsh, *City of Dickens*, pp. 182–83.

59 Patmore, *Angel in the House*, pp. 175–76.

60 Oswald Doughty, *A Victorian Romantic: Dante Gabriel Rossetti* (London: Frederick Muller, 1949), p. 417.

61 Quoted in Doughty, p. 418. For a thorough examination, from another perspective, of the ambiguous beauty/terror of the dead woman, see Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (London: Oxford, 1970), esp. "The Beauty of the Medusa," pp. 23–45.

62 Patmore, *Angel in the House*, p. 91.

63 Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, ed. Geoffrey and Kathleen Tillotson (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), p. 617.

64 Adrienne Rich, *Poems, Selected and New, 1950–1974* (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 146.

65 *King Lear*, 4.4.142–43; *The Faerie Queene*, 1.2.361.

66 John Gay, Alexander Pope, and John Arbuthnot, *Three Hours After Marriage*, ed. Richard Morton and William M. Peterson, Lake Erie College Studies, vol. 1 (Painesville, Ohio: Lake Erie College Press, 1961), p. 22.

67 Walpole to Hannah More, 24 January 1795.

68 *The Poems of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Harold Williams, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1937), 2:383, ll. 67–68.

69 "A Beautiful Young Nymph," 2:583, ll. 67–68.

70 Swift, "The Progress of Beauty," 1:228, ll. 77–78.

71 "Epistle II. To a Lady," *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 560, l. 219, l. 3.

72 *Three Hours After Marriage*, pp. 14, 54–56.

73 Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub, to Which Is Added the Battle of the Books and the Mechanical Operations of the Spirit*, ed. A. C. Guthkelch and D. Nichol Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), p. 240.

74 Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, canto 4, ll. 58–60, in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, p. 234.

75 Pope, *The Dunciad in Four Books* (1743), canto 1, ll. 311–18 in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, p. 734.

76 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, p. 138.

77 Karen Horney, "The Dread of Woman," in *Feminine Psychology* (New York: Norton, 1973), pp. 133–46; Dorothy Dinnerstein, *The Mermaid and the Minotaur*, pp. 124–54. For discussions of the "Medusa Complex" and its misogynistic messages see also Philip Slater, *The Glory of Hera* (Boston: Beacon, 1968) and R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (London: Penguin Books, 1965).

78 For discussions of Lilith see *A Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. James Hustings (Edinburgh, 1950); also Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1961), pp. 65–66; and T. H. Gaster, *Orientalia* 11 (1942):41–79. Also see George MacDonald, *Lilith*, and Laura Riding, "Eve's Side of It."

79 "Little Snow White." All references are to the text as given in *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* (New York: Random House, 1972).

80 Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1976), pp. 202–03.

81 Bettelheim, p. 205.

82 See Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 211–42.

83 Bettelheim, p. 211.

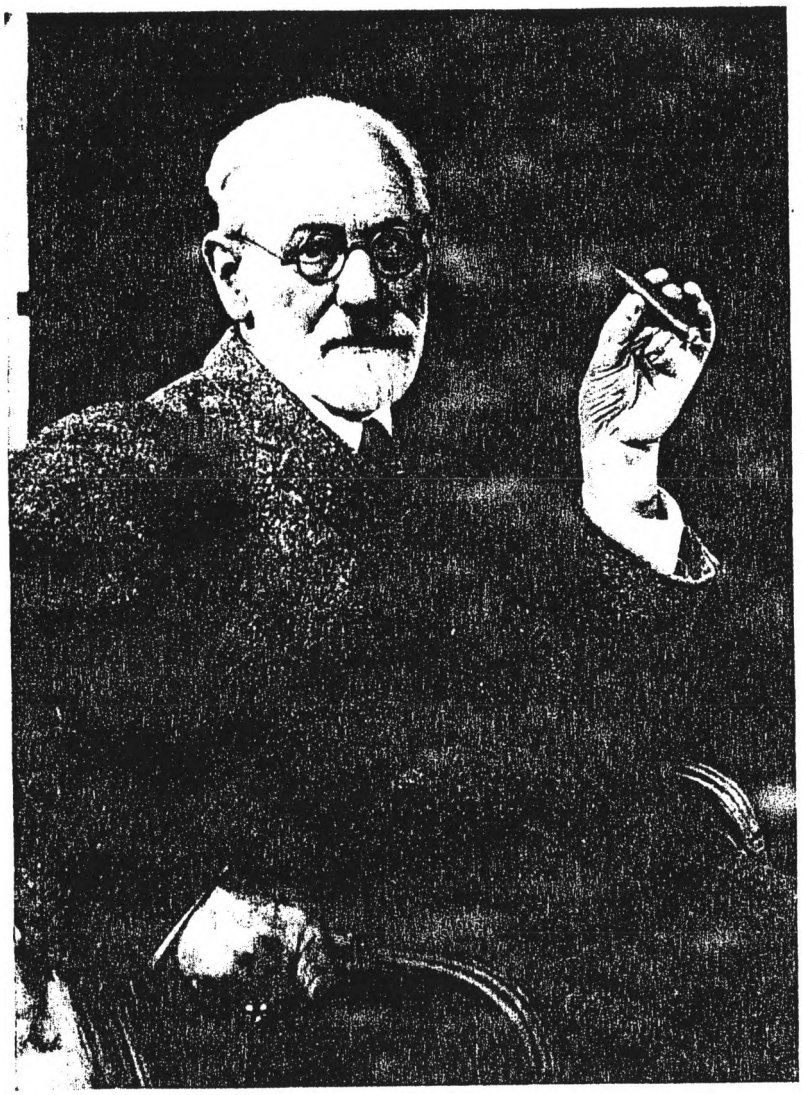
84 See "The Juniper Tree" in *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales.*
85 Geoffrey Hartman, "The Voice of the Shuttle," in *Beyond Formalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), pp. 337–55.
86 *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. W. H. Gardner and N. H. MacKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 133.
87 See Matthew Arnold, "Philomela," in *Poetry and Criticism of* Matthew Arnold, ed. A. Dwight Culler (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 144, l. 7.

CHAPTER 2

Epigraphs: Doctor on Patient (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1888), quoted in Ilza Veith, *Hysteria: The History of a Disease* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), pp. 219–20; *The Living of Charlotte Perkins Gilman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975; first published 1935), p. 104; J. 1261 in *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas Johnson, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1955: all subsequent references are to this edition); "The Red Shoes," *The Book of Folly* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), pp. 28–29.

1 In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," Eliot of course considers these matters; in *Mimesis* Auerbach traces the ways in which the realist includes what has been previously excluded from art; and in *The Sense of an Ending* Frank Kermode shows how poets and novelists lay bare the literariness of their predecessors' forms in order to explore the dissonance between fiction and reality.
2 J. Hillis Miller, "The Limits of Pluralism, III: The Critic as Host," *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 1977):446.
3 For a discussion of the woman writer and her place in Bloomian literary history, see Joanne Feit Diehl, "'Come Slowly—Eden': An Exploration of Women Poets and their Muse," *Signs* 3, no. 3 (Spring 1978): 572–87. See also the responses to Diehl in *Signs* 4, no. 1 (Autumn 1978): 188–96.
4 Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (New York: Vintage, 1975), p. xiii.
5 Ibid., pp. 404–05.
6 Adrienne Rich, "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision," in *Adrienne Rich's Poetry*, ed. Barbara Charlesworth Gelpi and Albert Gelpi (New York: Norton, 1975), p. 90.
7 Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, p. 402.
8 See Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
9 Annie Gottlieb, "Feminists Look at Motherhood," *Mother Jones* (November 1976):53.
10 *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas Johnson, 3 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958), 2:475; 2:518.
11 See Jessie Bernard, "The Paradox of the Happy Marriage," Pauline B. Bart, "Depression in Middle-Aged Women," and Naomi Weisstein, "Psychology Constructs the Female," all in Vivian Gornick and Barbara K. Moran, ed., *Woman in Sexist Society* (New York: Basic Books, 1971). See also Phyllis Chesler, *Women and Madness* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), and—for a summary of all these matters—Barbara Ehrenreich and Deirdre English, *Complaints and Disorders: The Sexual Politics of Sickness* (Old Westbury: The Feminist Press, 1973).

12 In *Hints on Insanity* (1861) John Millar wrote that "Mental derangement frequently occurs in young females from Amenorrhoea, especially in those who have any strong hereditary predisposition to insanity," adding that "an occasional warm hipbath or leeches to the pubis will . . . be followed by complete mental recovery." In 1873, Henry Mauldsey wrote in *Body and Mind* that "the monthly activity of the ovaries . . . has a notable effect upon the mind and body; wherefore it may become an important cause of mental and physical derangement." See especially the medical opinions of John Millar, Henry Maudsley, and Andrew Wynter in *Madness and Morals: Ideas on Insanity in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Vieda Skultans (London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), pp. 230–35.
13 See Marlene Boskind-Lodahl, "Cinderella's Stepsisters: A Feminist Perspective on Anorexia Nervosa and Bulimia," *Signs* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1976): 342–56; Walter Blum, "The Thirteenth Guest," (on agoraphobia), in *California Living, The San Francisco Sunday Examiner and Chronicle* (17 April 1977):8–12; Joan Arehart-Treichel, "Can Your Personality Kill You?" (on female rheumatoid arthritis, among other diseases), *New York* 10, no. 48 (28 November 1977):45: "According to studies conducted in recent years, four out of five rheumatoid victims are women, and for good reason: The disease appears to arise in those unhappy with the traditional female-sex role."
14 More recent discussions of the etiology and treatment of anorexia are offered in Hilde Bruch, M. D., *The Golden Cage: The Enigma of Anorexia Nervosa* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978), and in Salvador Minuchin, Bernice L. Rosman, and Lester Baker, *Psychosomatic Families: Anorexia Nervosa in Context* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978).
15 Quoted by Ehrenreich and English, *Complaints and Disorders*, p. 19.
16 Eichner, "The Eternal Feminine," Norton Critical Edition of *Faust*, p. 620.
17 John Winthrop, *The History of New England from 1630 to 1649*, ed. James Savage (Boston, 1826), 2:216.
18 Wendy Martin, "Anne Bradstreet's Poetry: A Study of Subversive Piety," *Shakespeare's Sisters*, ed. Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 19–31.
19 "The Uncensored Poet: Letters of Anne Sexton," *Ms.* 6, no. 5 (November 1977):53.
20 Margaret Atwood, *Lady Oracle* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), p. 335.
21 See *Northanger Abbey*, chapter 10: "You will allow, that in both [matrimony and dancing], man has the advantage of choice, woman only the power of refusal."
22 See Dickinson, *Poems*, J. 579 ("I had been hungry, all the Years"), J. 709 ("Publication—is the Auction"), and J. 891 ("To my quick ear the Leaves—conferred"); see also Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market."
23 See Dickinson, *Poems*, J. 327 ("Before I got my eye put out"), George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, book 2, chapter 20, and M. E. Coleridge, "Doubt," in *Poems by Mary E. Coleridge*, p. 40.
24 See Dickinson, *Poems*, J. 101.



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LECTURE XXXIII

FEMININITY[1]

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—All the while I am preparing to talk to you I am struggling with an internal difficulty. I feel uncertain, so to speak, of the extent of my licence. It is true that in the course of fifteen years of work psycho-analysis has changed and grown richer; but, in spite of that, an introduction to psycho-analysis might have been left without alteration or supplement. It is constantly in my mind that these lectures are without a *raison d'être*. For analysts I am saying too little and nothing at all that is new; but for you I am saying too much and saying things which you are not equipped to understand and which are not in your province. I have looked around for excuses and I have tried to justify each separate lecture on different grounds. The first one, on the theory of dreams, was supposed to put you back again at one blow into the analytic atmosphere and to show you how durable our views have turned out to be. I was led on to the second one, which followed the paths from dreams to what is called occultism, by the opportunity of speaking my mind without constraint on a department of work in which prejudiced expectations are fighting to-day against passionate resistances, and I could hope that your judgement, educated to tolerance on the example of psycho-analysis, would not refuse to accompany me on the excursion. The third lecture, on the dissection of the personality, certainly made the hardest demands upon you with its unfamiliar subject-matter; but it was impossible for me to keep this first beginning of an ego-psychology back from you, and if we had possessed it fifteen years ago I should have had to mention it to you then. My last lecture, finally, which you were probably

[1] [This lecture is mainly based on two earlier papers: 'Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes' (1925*j*) and 'Female Sexuality' (1931*b*). The last section, however, dealing with women in adult life, contains new material. Freud returned to the subject once again in Chapter VII of the posthumous *Outline of Psycho-Analysis* (1940*a* [1938]).]

able to follow only by great exertions, brought forward necessary corrections—fresh attempts at solving the most important conundrums; and my introduction would have been leading you astray if I had been silent about them. As you see, when one starts making excuses it turns out in the end that it was all inevitable, all the work of destiny. I submit to it, and I beg you to do the same.

To-day's lecture, too, should have no place in an introduction; but it may serve to give you an example of a detailed piece of analytic work, and I can say two things to recommend it. It brings forward nothing but observed facts, almost without any speculative additions, and it deals with a subject which has a claim on your interest second almost to no other. Throughout history people have knocked their heads against the riddle of the nature of femininity—

> Häupter in Hieroglyphenmützen,
> Häupter in Turban und schwarzem Barett,
> Perückenhäupter und tausend andre
> Arme, schwitzende Menschenhäupter. . . .[1]

Nor will *you* have escaped worrying over this problem—those of you who are men; to those of you who are women this will not apply—you are yourselves the problem. When you meet a human being, the first distinction you make is 'male or female?' and you are accustomed to make the distinction with unhesitating certainty. Anatomical science shares your certainty at one point and not much further. The male sexual product, the spermatozoon, and its vehicle are male; the ovum and the organism that harbours it are female. In both sexes organs have been formed which serve exclusively for the sexual functions; they were probably developed from the same [innate] disposition into two different forms. Besides this, in both sexes the other organs, the bodily shapes and tissues, show the influence of the individual's sex, but this is inconstant and its amount variable; these are what are known as the secondary

[1] Heads in hieroglyphic bonnets,
Heads in turbans and black birettas,
Heads in wigs and thousand other
Wretched, sweating heads of humans. . . .
(Heine, *Nordsee* [Second Cycle, VII, 'Fragen'].)

sexual characters. Science next tells you something that runs counter to your expectations and is probably calculated to confuse your feelings. It draws your attention to the fact that portions of the male sexual apparatus also appear in women's bodies, though in an atrophied state, and vice versa in the alternative case. It regards their occurrence as indications of *bisexuality*,[1] as though an individual is not a man or a woman but always both—merely a certain amount more the one than the other. You will then be asked to make yourselves familiar with the idea that the proportion in which masculine and feminine are mixed in an individual is subject to quite considerable fluctuations. Since, however, apart from the very rarest cases, only one kind of sexual product—ova or semen—is nevertheless present in one person, you are bound to have doubts as to the decisive significance of those elements and must conclude that what constitutes masculinity or femininity is an unknown characteristic which anatomy cannot lay hold of.

Can psychology do so perhaps? We are accustomed to employ 'masculine' and 'feminine' as mental qualities as well, and have in the same way transferred the notion of bisexuality to mental life. Thus we speak of a person, whether male or female, as behaving in a masculine way in one connection and in a feminine way in another. But you will soon perceive that this is only giving way to anatomy or to convention. You cannot give the concepts of 'masculine' and 'feminine' *any* new connotation. The distinction is not a psychological one; when you say 'masculine', you usually mean 'active', and when you say 'feminine', you usually mean 'passive'. Now it is true that a relation of the kind exists. The male sex-cell is actively mobile and searches out the female one, and the latter, the ovum, is immobile and waits passively. This behaviour of the elementary sexual organisms is indeed a model for the conduct of sexual individuals during intercourse. The male pursues the female for the purpose of sexual union, seizes hold of her and penetrates into her. But by this you have precisely reduced the character-

[1] [Bisexuality was discussed by Freud in the first edition of his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 141–4. The passage includes a long footnote to which he made additions in later issues of the work.]

istic of masculinity to the factor of aggressiveness so far as psychology is concerned. You may well doubt whether you have gained any real advantage from this when you reflect that in some classes of animals the females are the stronger and more aggressive and the male is active only in the single act of sexual union. This is so, for instance, with the spiders. Even the functions of rearing and caring for the young, which strike us as feminine *par excellence*, are not invariably attached to the female sex in animals. In quite high species we find that the sexes share the task of caring for the young between them or even that the male alone devotes himself to it. Even in the sphere of human sexual life you soon see how inadequate it is to make masculine behaviour coincide with activity and feminine with passivity. A mother is active in every sense towards her child; the act of lactation itself may equally be described as the mother suckling the baby or as her being sucked by it. The further you go from the narrow sexual sphere the more obvious will the 'error of superimposition'[1] become. Women can display great activity in various directions, men are not able to live in company with their own kind unless they develop a large amount of passive adaptability. If you now tell me that these facts go to prove precisely that both men and women are bisexual in the psychological sense, I shall conclude that you have decided in your own minds to make 'active' coincide with 'masculine' and 'passive' with 'feminine'. But I advise you against it. It seems to me to serve no useful purpose and adds nothing to our knowledge.[2]

One might consider characterizing femininity psychologically as giving preference to passive aims. This is not, of course, the same thing as passivity; to achieve a passive aim may call for a large amount of activity. It is perhaps the case that in a woman, on the basis of her share in the sexual function, a preference for passive behaviour and passive aims is carried over into her life to a greater or lesser extent, in proportion to the

[1] [I.e. mistaking two different things for a single one. The term was explained in *Introductory Lectures*, XX, *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 304.]

[2] [The difficulty of finding a psychological meaning for 'masculine' and 'feminine' was discussed in a long footnote added in 1915 to the *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 219–20 and again at the beginning of a still longer footnote at the end of Chapter IV of *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), ibid., **21**, 105–6.]

limits, restricted or far-reaching, within which her sexual life thus serves as a model. But we must beware in this of underestimating the influence of social customs, which similarly force women into passive situations. All this is still far from being cleared up. There is one particularly constant relation between femininity and instinctual life which we do not want to overlook. The suppression of women's aggressiveness which is prescribed for them constitutionally and imposed on them socially favours the development of powerful masochistic impulses, which succeed, as we know, in binding erotically the destructive trends which have been diverted inwards. Thus masochism, as people say, is truly feminine. But if, as happens so often, you meet with masochism in men, what is left to you but to say that these men exhibit very plain feminine traits?

And now you are already prepared to hear that psychology too is unable to solve the riddle of femininity. The explanation must no doubt come from elsewhere, and cannot come till we have learnt how in general the differentiation of living organisms into two sexes came about. We know nothing about it, yet the existence of two sexes is a most striking characteristic of organic life which distinguishes it sharply from inanimate nature. However, we find enough to study in those human individuals who, through the possession of female genitals, are characterized as manifestly or predominantly feminine. In conformity with its peculiar nature, psycho-analysis does not try to describe what a woman is—that would be a task it could scarcely perform—but sets about enquiring how she comes into being, how a woman develops out of a child with a bisexual disposition. In recent times we have begun to learn a little about this, thanks to the circumstance that several of our excellent women colleagues in analysis have begun to work at the question. The discussion of this has gained special attractiveness from the distinction between the sexes. For the ladies, whenever some comparison seemed to turn out unfavourable to their sex, were able to utter a suspicion that we, the male analysts, had been unable to overcome certain deeply-rooted prejudices against what was feminine, and that this was being paid for in the partiality of our researches. We, on the other hand, standing on the ground of bisexuality, had no difficulty in avoiding impoliteness. We had only to say: 'This doesn't apply to *you*. You're the exception; on this point you're more masculine than feminine.'

We approach the investigation of the sexual development of women with two expectations. The first is that here once more the constitution will not adapt itself to its function without a struggle. The second is that the decisive turning-points will already have been prepared for or completed before puberty. Both expectations are promptly confirmed. Furthermore, a comparison with what happens with boys tells us that the development of a little girl into a normal woman is more difficult and more complicated, since it includes two extra tasks, to which there is nothing corresponding in the development of a man. Let us follow the parallel lines from their beginning. Undoubtedly the material is different to start with in boys and girls: it did not need psycho-analysis to establish that. The difference in the structure of the genitals is accompanied by other bodily differences which are too well known to call for mention. Differences emerge too in the instinctual disposition which give a glimpse of the later nature of women. A little girl is as a rule less aggressive, defiant and self-sufficient; she seems to have a greater need for being shown affection and on that account to be more dependent and pliant. It is probably only as a result of this pliancy that she can be taught more easily and quicker to control her excretions: urine and faeces are the first gifts that children make to those who look after them [see p. 100 above], and controlling them is the first concession to which the instinctual life of children can be induced. One gets an impression, too, that little girls are more intelligent and livelier than boys of the same age; they go out more to meet the external world and at the same time form stronger object-cathexes. I cannot say whether this lead in development has been confirmed by exact observations, but in any case there is no question that girls cannot be described as intellectually backward. These sexual differences are not, however, of great consequence: they can be outweighed by individual variations. For our immediate purposes they can be disregarded.

Both sexes seem to pass through the early phases of libidinal development in the same manner. It might have been expected that in girls there would already have been some lag in aggres-

siveness in the sadistic-anal phase, but such is not the case. Analysis of children's play has shown our women analysts that the aggressive impulses of little girls leave nothing to be desired in the way of abundance and violence. With their entry into the phallic phase the differences between the sexes are completely eclipsed by their agreements. We are now obliged to recognize that the little girl is a little man. In boys, as we know, this phase is marked by the fact that they have learnt how to derive pleasurable sensations from their small penis and connect its excited state with their ideas of sexual intercourse. Little girls do the same thing with their still smaller clitoris. It seems that with them all their masturbatory acts are carried out on this penis-equivalent, and that the truly feminine vagina is still undiscovered by both sexes. It is true that there are a few isolated reports of early vaginal sensations as well, but it could not be easy to distinguish these from sensations in the anus or vestibulum; in any case they cannot play a great part. We are entitled to keep to our view that in the phallic phase of girls the clitoris is the leading erotogenic zone. But it is not, of course, going to remain so. With the change to femininity the clitoris should wholly or in part hand over its sensitivity, and at the same time its importance, to the vagina. This would be one of the two tasks which a woman has to perform in the course of her development, whereas the more fortunate man has only to continue at the time of his sexual maturity the activity that he has previously carried out at the period of the early efflorescence of his sexuality.

We shall return to the part played by the clitoris; let us now turn to the second task with which a girl's development is burdened. A boy's mother is the first object of his love, and she remains so too during the formation of his Oedipus complex and, in essence, all through his life. For a girl too her first object must be her mother (and the figures of wet-nurses and foster-mothers that merge into her). The first object-cathexes occur in attachment to the satisfaction of the major and simple vital needs,[1] and the circumstances of the care of children are the same for both sexes. But in the Oedipus situation the girl's father has become her love-object, and we expect that in the normal course of development she will find her way from

[1] [Cf. *Introductory Lectures*, XXI, *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 328–9.]

this paternal object to her final choice of an object. In the course of time, therefore, a girl has to change her erotogenic zone and her object—both of which a boy retains. The question then arises of how this happens: in particular, how does a girl pass from her mother to an attachment to her father? or, in other words, how does she pass from her masculine phase to the feminine one to which she is biologically destined?

It would be a solution of ideal simplicity if we could suppose that from a particular age onwards the elementary influence of the mutual attraction between the sexes makes itself felt and impels the small woman towards men, while the same law allows the boy to continue with his mother. We might suppose in addition that in this the children are following the pointer given them by the sexual preference of their parents. But we are not going to find things so easy; we scarcely know whether we are to believe seriously in the power of which poets talk so much and with such enthusiasm but which cannot be further dissected analytically. We have found an answer of quite another sort by means of laborious investigations, the material for which at least was easy to arrive at. For you must know that the number of women who remain till a late age tenderly dependent on a paternal object, or indeed on their real father, is very great. We have established some surprising facts about these women with an intense attachment of long duration to their father. We knew, of course, that there had been a preliminary stage of attachment to the mother, but we did not know that it could be so rich in content and so long-lasting, and could leave behind so many opportunities for fixations and dispositions. During this time the girl's father is only a troublesome rival; in some cases the attachment to her mother lasts beyond the fourth year of life. Almost everything that we find later in her relation to her father was already present in this earlier attachment and has been transferred subsequently on to her father. In short, we get an impression that we cannot understand women unless we appreciate this phase of their pre-Oedipus attachment to their mother.

We shall be glad, then, to know the nature of the girl's libidinal relations to her mother. The answer is that they are of very many different kinds. Since they persist through all three phases of infantile sexuality, they also take on the characteristics of the

different phases and express themselves by oral, sadistic-anal and phallic wishes. These wishes represent active as well as passive impulses; if we relate them to the differentiation of the sexes which is to appear later—though we should avoid doing so as far as possible—we may call them masculine and feminine. Besides this, they are completely ambivalent, both affectionate and of a hostile and aggressive nature. The latter often only come to light after being changed into anxiety ideas. It is not always easy to point to a formulation of these early sexual wishes; what is most clearly expressed is a wish to get the mother with child and the corresponding wish to bear her a child—both belonging to the phallic period and sufficiently surprising, but established beyond doubt by analytic observation. The attractiveness of these investigations lies in the surprising detailed findings which they bring us. Thus, for instance, we discover the fear of being murdered or poisoned, which may later form the core of a paranoic illness, already present in this pre-Oedipus period, in relation to the mother. Or another case: you will recall an interesting episode in the history of analytic research which caused me many distressing hours. In the period in which the main interest was directed to discovering infantile sexual traumas, almost all my women patients told me that they had been seduced by their father. I was driven to recognize in the end that these reports were untrue and so came to understand that hysterical symptoms are derived from phantasies and not from real occurrences. It was only later that I was able to recognize in this phantasy of being seduced by the father the expression of the typical Oedipus complex in women. And now we find the phantasy of seduction once more in the pre-Oedipus prehistory of girls; but the seducer is regularly the mother. Here, however, the phantasy touches the ground of reality, for it was really the mother who by her activities over the child's bodily hygiene inevitably stimulated, and perhaps even roused for the first time, pleasurable sensations in her genitals.[1]

[1] [In his early discussions of the aetiology of hysteria Freud often mentioned seduction by adults as among its commonest causes (see, for instance, the second paper on the neuro-psychoses of defence (1896*b*), *Standard Ed.*, **3**, 164 and 'The Aetiology of Hysteria' (1896*c*), ibid., 208). But nowhere in these early publications did he specifically inculpate the girl's father. Indeed, in some additional footnotes written in 1924 for the *Gesammelte Schriften* reprint of *Studies on Hysteria*, he admitted to having on two occasions suppressed the fact of the father's responsibility (see *Standard Ed.*, **2**, 134 *n*, and 170 *n*.). He made this quite clear, however, in the letter to Fliess of September 21, 1897 (Freud, 1950*a*, Letter 69), in which he first expressed his scepticism about these stories told by his patients. His first published admission of his mistake was given several years later in a hint in the second of the *Three Essays* (1905*d*), *Standard Ed.*, **7**, 190, but a much fuller account of the position followed in his contribution on the aetiology of the neuroses to a volume by Löwenfeld (1906*a*), ibid., **7**, 274–5. Later on he gave two accounts of the effects that this discovery of his mistake had on his own mind—in his 'History of the Psycho-Analytic Movement' (1914*d*), ibid., **14**, 17–18 and in his *Autobiographical Study* (1925*d*), ibid., **20**, 33–5. The further discovery which is described in the present paragraph of the text had already been indicated in the paper on 'Female Sexuality' (1931*b*), ibid., **21**, 238.]

I have no doubt you are ready to suspect that this portrayal of the abundance and strength of a little girl's sexual relations with her mother is very much overdrawn. After all, one has opportunities of seeing little girls and notices nothing of the sort. But the objection is not to the point. Enough can be seen in the children if one knows how to look. And besides, you should consider how little of its sexual wishes a child can bring to preconscious expression or communicate at all. Accordingly we are only within our rights if we study the residues and consequences of this emotional world in retrospect, in people in whom these processes of development had attained a specially clear and even excessive degree of expansion. Pathology has always done us the service of making discernible by isolation and exaggeration conditions which would remain concealed in a normal state. And since our investigations have been carried out on people who were by no means seriously abnormal, I think we should regard their outcome as deserving belief.

We will now turn our interest on to the single question of what it is that brings this powerful attachment of the girl to her mother to an end. This, as we know, is its usual fate: it is destined to make room for an attachment to her father. Here we come upon a fact which is a pointer to our further advance. This step in development does not involve only a simple change of object. The turning away from the mother is accompanied by hostility; the attachment to the mother ends in hate. A hate of that kind may become very striking and last all through life; it may be carefully overcompensated later on; as a rule one part

of it is overcome while another part persists. Events of later years naturally influence this greatly. We will restrict ourselves, however, to studying it at the time at which the girl turns to her father and to enquiring into the motives for it. We are then given a long list of accusations and grievances against the mother which are supposed to justify the child's hostile feelings; they are of varying validity which we shall not fail to examine. A number of them are obvious rationalizations and the true sources of enmity remain to be found. I hope you will be interested if on this occasion I take you through all the details of a psycho-analytic investigation.

The reproach against the mother which goes back furthest is that she gave the child too little milk—which is construed against her as lack of love. Now there is some justification for this reproach in our families. Mothers often have insufficient nourishment to give their children and are content to suckle them for a few months, for half or three-quarters of a year. Among primitive peoples children are fed at their mother's breast for two or three years. The figure of the wet-nurse who suckles the child is as a rule merged into the mother; when this has not happened, the reproach is turned into another one—that the nurse, who fed the child so willingly, was sent away by the mother too early. But whatever the true state of affairs may have been, it is impossible that the child's reproach can be justified as often as it is met with. It seems, rather, that the child's avidity for its earliest nourishment is altogether insatiable, that it never gets over the pain of losing its mother's breast. I should not be surprised if the analysis of a primitive child, who could still suck at its mother's breast when it was already able to run about and talk, were to bring the same reproach to light. The fear of being poisoned is also probably connected with the withdrawal of the breast. Poison is nourishment that makes one ill. Perhaps children trace back their early illnesses too to this frustration. A fair amount of intellectual education is a prerequisite for believing in chance; primitive people and uneducated ones, and no doubt children as well, are able to assign a ground for everything that happens. Perhaps originally it was a reason on animistic lines. Even to-day in some strata of our population no one can die without having been killed by someone else—preferably by the doctor.

And the regular reaction of a neurotic to the death of someone closely connected with him is to put the blame on himself for having caused the death.

The next accusation against the child's mother flares up when the next baby appears in the nursery. If possible the connection with oral frustration is preserved: the mother could not or would not give the child any more milk because she needed the nourishment for the new arrival. In cases in which the two children are so close in age that lactation is prejudiced by the second pregnancy, this reproach acquires a real basis, and it is a remarkable fact that a child, even with an age difference of only 11 months, is not too young to take notice of what is happening. But what the child grudges the unwanted intruder and rival is not only the suckling but all the other signs of maternal care. It feels that it has been dethroned, despoiled, prejudiced in its rights; it casts a jealous hatred upon the new baby and develops a grievance against the faithless mother which often finds expression in a disagreeable change in its behaviour. It becomes 'naughty', perhaps, irritable and disobedient and goes back on the advances it has made towards controlling its excretions. All of this has been very long familiar and is accepted as self-evident; but we rarely form a correct idea of the strength of these jealous impulses, of the tenacity with which they persist and of the magnitude of their influence on later development. Especially as this jealousy is constantly receiving fresh nourishment in the later years of childhood and the whole shock is repeated with the birth of each new brother or sister. Nor does it make much difference if the child happens to remain the mother's preferred favourite. A child's demands for love are immoderate, they make exclusive claims and tolerate no sharing.

An abundant source of a child's hostility to its mother is provided by its multifarious sexual wishes, which alter according to the phase of the libido and which cannot for the most part be satisfied. The strongest of these frustrations occur at the phallic period, if the mother forbids pleasurable activity with the genitals—often with severe threats and every sign of displeasure—activity to which, after all, she herself had introduced the child. One would think these were reasons enough to account for a girl's turning away from her mother. One would

judge, if so, that the estrangement follows inevitably from the nature of children's sexuality, from the immoderate character of their demand for love and the impossibility of fulfilling their sexual wishes. It might be thought indeed that this first love-relation of the child's is doomed to dissolution for the very reason that it is the first, for these early object-cathexes are regularly ambivalent to a high degree. A powerful tendency to aggressiveness is always present beside a powerful love, and the more passionately a child loves its object the more sensitive does it become to disappointments and frustrations from that object; and in the end the love must succumb to the accumulated hostility. Or the idea that there is an original ambivalence such as this in erotic cathexes may be rejected, and it may be pointed out that it is the special nature of the mother-child relation that leads, with equal inevitability, to the destruction of the child's love; for even the mildest upbringing cannot avoid using compulsion and introducing restrictions, and any such intervention in the child's liberty must provoke as a reaction an inclination to rebelliousness and aggressiveness. A discussion of these possibilities might, I think, be most interesting; but an objection suddenly emerges which forces our interest in another direction. All these factors—the slights, the disappointments in love, the jealousy, the seduction followed by prohibition—are, after all, also in operation in the relation of a *boy* to his mother and are yet unable to alienate him from the maternal object. Unless we can find something that is specific for girls and is not present or not in the same way present in boys, we shall not have explained the termination of the attachment of girls to their mother.

I believe we have found this specific factor, and indeed where we expected to find it, even though in a surprising form. Where we expected to find it, I say, for it lies in the castration complex. After all, the anatomical distinction [between the sexes] must express itself in psychical consequences. It was, however, a surprise to learn from analyses that girls hold their mother responsible for their lack of a penis and do not forgive her for their being thus put at a disadvantage.

As you hear, then, we ascribe a castration complex to women as well. And for good reasons, though its content cannot be the same as with boys. In the latter the castration complex arises

after they have learnt from the sight of the female genitals that the organ which they value so highly need not necessarily accompany the body. At this the boy recalls to mind the threats he brought on himself by his doings with that organ, he begins to give credence to them and falls under the influence of fear of castration, which will be the most powerful motive force in his subsequent development. The castration complex of girls is also started by the sight of the genitals of the other sex. They at once notice the difference and, it must be admitted, its significance too. They feel seriously wronged, often declare that they want to 'have something like it too', and fall a victim to 'envy for the penis', which will leave ineradicable traces on their development and the formation of their character and which will not be surmounted in even the most favourable cases without a severe expenditure of psychical energy. The girl's recognition of the fact of her being without a penis does not by any means imply that she submits to the fact easily. On the contrary, she continues to hold on for a long time to the wish to get something like it herself and she believes in that possibility for improbably long years; and analysis can show that, at a period when knowledge of reality has long since rejected the fulfilment of the wish as unattainable, it persists in the unconscious and retains a considerable cathexis of energy. The wish to get the longed-for penis eventually in spite of everything may contribute to the motives that drive a mature woman to analysis, and what she may reasonably expect from analysis—a capacity, for instance, to carry on an intellectual profession—may often be recognized as a sublimated modification of this repressed wish.

One cannot very well doubt the importance of envy for the penis. You may take it as an instance of male injustice if I assert that envy and jealousy play an even greater part in the mental life of women than of men. It is not that I think these characteristics are absent in men or that I think they have no other roots in women than envy for the penis; but I am inclined to attribute their greater amount in women to this latter influence. Some analysts, however, have shown an inclination to depreciate the importance of this first instalment of penis-envy in the phallic phase. They are of opinion that what we find of this attitude in women is in the main a secondary structure which

has come about on the occasion of later conflicts by regression to this early infantile impulse. This, however, is a general problem of depth psychology. In many pathological—or even unusual—instinctual attitudes (for instance, in all sexual perversions) the question arises of how much of their strength is to be attributed to early infantile fixations and how much to the influence of later experiences and developments. In such cases it is almost always a matter of complemental series such as we put forward in our discussion of the aetiology of the neuroses.[1] Both factors play a part in varying amounts in the causation; a less on the one side is balanced by a more on the other. The infantile factor sets the pattern in all cases but does not always determine the issue, though it often does. Precisely in the case of penis-envy I should argue decidedly in favour of the preponderance of the infantile factor.

The discovery that she is castrated is a turning-point in a girl's growth. Three possible lines of development start from it: one leads to sexual inhibition or to neurosis, the second to change of character in the sense of a masculinity complex, the third, finally, to normal femininity. We have learnt a fair amount, though not everything, about all three.

The essential content of the first is as follows: the little girl has hitherto lived in a masculine way, has been able to get pleasure by the excitation of her clitoris and has brought this activity into relation with her sexual wishes directed towards her mother, which are often active ones; now, owing to the influence of her penis-envy, she loses her enjoyment in her phallic sexuality. Her self-love is mortified by the comparison with the boy's far superior equipment and in consequence she renounces her masturbatory satisfaction from her clitoris, repudiates her love for her mother and at the same time not infrequently represses a good part of her sexual trends in general. No doubt her turning away from her mother does not occur all at once, for to begin with the girl regards her castration as an individual misfortune, and only gradually extends it to other females and finally to her mother as well. Her love was directed to her *phallic* mother; with the discovery that her mother is castrated it becomes possible to drop her as an object, so that

[1] [See *Introductory Lectures*, XXII and XXIII, *Standard Ed.*, **16**, 347, 362 and 364.]

the motives for hostility, which have long been accumulating, gain the upper hand. This means, therefore, that as a result of the discovery of women's lack of a penis they are debased in value for girls just as they are for boys and later perhaps for men.

You all know the immense aetiological importance attributed by our neurotic patients to their masturbation. They make it responsible for all their troubles and we have the greatest difficulty in persuading them that they are mistaken. In fact, however, we ought to admit to them that they are right, for masturbation is the executive agent of infantile sexuality, from the faulty development of which they are indeed suffering. But what neurotics mostly blame is the masturbation of the period of puberty; they have mostly forgotten that of early infancy, which is what is really in question. I wish I might have an opportunity some time of explaining to you at length how important all the factual details of early masturbation become for the individual's subsequent neurosis or character: whether or not it was discovered, how the parents struggled against it or permitted it, or whether he succeeded in suppressing it himself. All of this leaves permanent traces on his development. But I am on the whole glad that I need not do this. It would be a hard and tedious task and at the end of it you would put me in an embarrassing situation by quite certainly asking me to give you some practical advice as to how a parent or educator should deal with the masturbation of small children.[1] From the development of girls, which is what my present lecture is concerned with, I can give you the example of a child herself trying to get free from masturbating. She does not always succeed in this. If envy for the penis has provoked a powerful impulse against clitoridal masturbation but this nevertheless refuses to give way, a violent struggle for liberation ensues in which the girl, as it were, herself takes over the role of her deposed mother and gives expression to her entire dissatisfaction with her inferior clitoris in her efforts against obtaining satisfaction from it. Many years later, when her

[1] [Freud's fullest discussion of masturbation was in his contributions to a symposium on the subject in the Vienna Psycho-Analytical Society (1912*f*), *Standard Ed.*, **12**, 241 ff., where a number of other references are given.]

masturbatory activity has long since been suppressed, an interest still persists which we must interpret as a defence against a temptation that is still dreaded. It manifests inself in the emergence of sympathy for those to whom similar difficulties are attributed, it plays a part as a motive in contracting a marriage and, indeed, it may determine the choice of a husband or lover. Disposing of early infantile masturbation is truly no easy or indifferent business.

Along with the abandonment of clitoridal masturbation a certain amount of activity is renounced. Passivity now has the upper hand, and the girl's turning to her father is accomplished principally with the help of passive instinctual impulses. You can see that a wave of development like this, which clears the phallic activity out of the way, smooths the ground for femininity. If too much is not lost in the course of it through repression, this femininity may turn out to be normal. The wish with which the girl turns to her father is no doubt originally the wish for the penis which her mother has refused her and which she now expects from her father. The feminine situation is only established, however, if the wish for a penis is replaced by one for a baby, if, that is, a baby takes the place of a penis in accordance with an ancient symbolic equivalence [p. 100 f.]. It has not escaped us that the girl has wished for a baby earlier, in the undisturbed phallic phase: that, of course, was the meaning of her playing with dolls. But that play was not in fact an expression of her femininity; it served as an identification with her mother with the intention of substituting activity for passivity. *She* was playing the part of her mother and the doll was herself: now she could do with the baby everything that her mother used to do with her. Not until the emergence of the wish for a penis does the doll-baby become a baby from the girl's father, and thereafter the aim of the most powerful feminine wish. Her happiness is great if later on this wish for a baby finds fulfilment in reality, and quite especially so if the baby is a little boy who brings the longed-for penis with him.[1] Often enough in her combined picture of 'a baby from her father' the emphasis is laid on the baby and her father left unstressed. In this way the ancient masculine wish for the possession of a penis is still faintly visible through the femininity now achieved. But perhaps we ought rather to recognize this wish for a penis as being *par excellence* a feminine one.

[1] [See p. 133 below.]

With the transference of the wish for a penis-baby on to her father, the girl has entered the situation of the Oedipus complex. Her hostility to her mother, which did not need to be freshly created, is now greatly intensified, for she becomes the girl's rival, who receives from her father everything that she desires from him. For a long time the girl's Oedipus complex concealed her pre-Oedipus attachment to her mother from our view, though it is nevertheless so important and leaves such lasting fixations behind it. For girls the Oedipus situation is the outcome of a long and difficult development; it is a kind of preliminary solution, a position of rest which is not soon abandoned, especially as the beginning of the latency period is not far distant. And we are now struck by a difference between the two sexes, which is probably momentous, in regard to the relation of the Oedipus complex to the castration complex. In a boy the Oedipus complex, in which he desires his mother and would like to get rid of his father as being a rival, develops naturally from the phase of his phallic sexuality. The threat of castration compels him, however, to give up that attitude. Under the impression of the danger of losing his penis, the Oedipus complex is abandoned, repressed and, in the most normal cases, entirely destroyed [see p. 92], and a severe super-ego is set up as its heir. What happens with a girl is almost the opposite. The castration complex prepares for the Oedipus complex instead of destroying it; the girl is driven out of her attachment to her mother through the influence of her envy for the penis and she enters the Oedipus situation as though into a haven of refuge. In the absence of fear of castration the chief motive is lacking which leads boys to surmount the Oedipus complex. Girls remain in it for an indeterminate length of time; they demolish it late and, even so, incompletely. In these circumstances the formation of the super-ego must suffer; it cannot attain the strength and independence which give it its cultural significance, and feminists are not pleased when we point out to them the effects of this factor upon the average feminine character.

To go back a little. We mentioned [p. 126] as the second possible reaction to the discovery of female castration the development of a powerful masculinity complex. By this we mean that

the girl refuses, as it were, to recognize the unwelcome fact and, defiantly rebellious, even exaggerates her previous masculinity, clings to her clitoridal activity and takes refuge in an identification with her phallic mother or her father. What can it be that decides in favour of this outcome? We can only suppose that it is a constitutional factor, a greater amount of activity, such as is ordinarily characteristic of a male. However that may be, the essence of this process is that at this point in development the wave of passivity is avoided which opens the way to the turn towards femininity. The extreme achievement of such a masculinity complex would appear to be the influencing of the choice of an object in the sense of manifest homosexuality. Analytic experience teaches us, to be sure, that female homosexuality is seldom or never a direct continuation of infantile masculinity. Even for a girl of this kind it seems necessary that she should take her father as an object for some time and enter the Oedipus situation. But afterwards, as a result of her inevitable disappointments from her father, she is driven to regress into her early masculinity complex. The significance of these disappointments must not be exaggerated; a girl who is destined to become feminine is not spared them, though they do not have the same effect. The predominance of the constitutional factor seems indisputable; but the two phases in the development of female homosexuality are well mirrored in the practices of homosexuals, who play the parts of mother and baby with each other as often and as clearly as those of husband and wife.

What I have been telling you here may be described as the prehistory of women. It is a product of the very last few years and may have been of interest to you as an example of detailed analytic work. Since its subject is woman, I will venture on this occasion to mention by name a few of the women who have made valuable contributions to this investigation. Dr. Ruth Mack Brunswick [1928] was the first to describe a case of neurosis which went back to a fixation in the pre-Oedipus stage and had never reached the Oedipus situation at all. The case took the form of jealous paranoia and proved accessible to therapy. Dr. Jeanne Lampl-de Groot [1927] has established the incredible phallic activity of girls towards their mother by

some assured observations, and Dr. Helene Deutsch [1932] has shown that the erotic actions of homosexual women reproduce the relations between mother and baby.

It is not my intention to pursue the further behaviour of femininity through puberty to the period of maturity. Our knowledge, moreover, would be insufficient for the purpose. But I will bring a few features together in what follows. Taking its prehistory as a starting-point, I will only emphasize here that the development of femininity remains exposed to disturbance by the residual phenomena of the early masculine period. Regressions to the fixations of the pre-Oedipus phases very frequently occur; in the course of some women's lives there is a repeated alternation between periods in which masculinity or femininity gains the upper hand. Some portion of what we men call 'the enigma of women' may perhaps be derived from this expression of bisexuality in women's lives. But another question seems to have become ripe for judgement in the course of these researches. We have called the motive force of sexual life 'the libido'. Sexual life is dominated by the polarity of masculine–feminine; thus the notion suggests itself of considering the relation of the libido to this antithesis. It would not be surprising if it were to turn out that each sexuality had its own special libido appropriated to it, so that one sort of libido would pursue the aims of a masculine sexual life and another sort those of a feminine one. But nothing of the kind is true. There is only one libido, which serves both the masculine and the feminine sexual functions. To it itself we cannot assign any sex; if, following the conventional equation of activity and masculinity, we are inclined to describe it as masculine, we must not forget that it also covers trends with a passive aim. Nevertheless the juxtaposition 'feminine libido' is without any justification. Furthermore, it is our impression that more constraint has been applied to the libido when it is pressed into the service of the feminine function, and that—to speak teleologically—Nature takes less careful account of its [that function's] demands than in the case of masculinity. And the reason for this may lie—thinking once again teleologically—in the fact that the accomplishment of the aim of biology has been entrusted to the aggressiveness of men and has been made to some extent independent of women's consent.

The sexual frigidity of women, the frequency of which appears to confirm this disregard, is a phenomenon that is still insufficiently understood. Sometimes it is psychogenic and in that case accessible to influence; but in other cases it suggests the hypothesis of its being constitutionally determined and even of there being a contributory anatomical factor.

I have promised to tell you of a few more psychical peculiarities of mature femininity, as we come across them in analytic observation. We do not lay claim to more than an average validity for these assertions; nor is it always easy to distinguish what should be ascribed to the influence of the sexual function and what to social breeding. Thus, we attribute a larger amount of narcissism to femininity, which also affects women's choice of object, so that to be loved is a stronger need for them than to love. The effect of penis-envy has a share, further, in the physical vanity of women, since they are bound to value their charms more highly as a late compensation for their original sexual inferiority.[1] Shame, which is considered to be a feminine characteristic *par excellence* but is far more a matter of convention than might be supposed, has as its purpose, we believe, concealment of genital deficiency. We are not forgetting that at a later time shame takes on other functions. It seems that women have made few contributions to the discoveries and inventions in the history of civilization; there is, however, one technique which they may have invented—that of plaiting and weaving. If that is so, we should be tempted to guess the unconscious motive for the achievement. Nature herself would seem to have given the model which this achievement imitates by causing the growth at maturity of the pubic hair that conceals the genitals. The step that remained to be taken lay in making the threads adhere to one another, while on the body they stick into the skin and are only matted together. If you reject this idea as fantastic and regard my belief in the influence of lack of a penis on the configuration of femininity as an *idée fixe*, I am of course defenceless.

The determinants of women's choice of an object are often made unrecognizable by social conditions. Where the choice is able to show itself freely, it is often made in accordance with the narcissistic ideal of the man whom the girl had wished to

[1] [Cf. 'On Narcissism' (1914*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **14**, 88–9.]

become. If the girl has remained in her attachment to her father —that is, in the Oedipus complex—her choice is made according to the paternal type. Since, when she turned from her mother to her father, the hostility of her ambivalent relation remained with her mother, a choice of this kind should guarantee a happy marriage. But very often the outcome is of a kind that presents a general threat to such a settlement of the conflict due to ambivalence. The hostility that has been left behind follows in the train of the positive attachment and spreads over on to the new object. The woman's husband, who to begin with inherited from her father, becomes after a time her mother's heir as well. So it may easily happen that the second half of a woman's life may be filled by the struggle against her husband, just as the shorter first half was filled by her rebellion against her mother. When this reaction has been lived through, a second marriage may easily turn out very much more satisfying.[1] Another alteration in a woman's nature, for which lovers are unprepared, may occur in a marriage after the first child is born. Under the influence of a woman's becoming a mother herself, an identification with her own mother may be revived, against which she had striven up till the time of her marriage, and this may attract all the available libido to itself, so that the compulsion to repeat reproduces an unhappy marriage between her parents. The difference in a mother's reaction to the birth of a son or a daughter shows that the old factor of lack of a penis has even now not lost its strength. A mother is only brought unlimited satisfaction by her relation to a son; this is altogether the most perfect, the most free from ambivalence of all human relationships.[2] A mother can transfer to her son the ambition which she has been obliged to suppress in herself, and she can expect from him the satisfaction of all that has been left over in her of her masculinity complex. Even a marriage is not made secure until the wife

[1] [This had already been remarked upon earlier, in 'The Taboo of Virginity' (1918*a*), *Standard Ed.*, **11**, 206.]

[2] [This point seems to have been made by Freud first in a footnote to Chapter VI of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, **18**, 101 *n.* He repeated it in the *Introductory Lectures*, XIII, ibid., **15**, 206 and in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930*a*), ibid., **21**, 113. That exceptions may occur is shown by the example above, p. 66.]

has succeeded in making her husband her child as well and in acting as a mother to him.

A woman's identification with her mother allows us to distinguish two strata: the pre-Oedipus one which rests on her affectionate attachment to her mother and takes her as a model, and the later one from the Oedipus complex which seeks to get rid of her mother and take her place with her father. We are no doubt justified in saying that much of both of them is left over for the future and that neither of them is adequately surmounted in the course of development. But the phase of the affectionate pre-Oedipus attachment is the decisive one for a woman's future: during it preparations are made for the acquisition of the characteristics with which she will later fulfil her role in the sexual function and perform her invaluable social tasks. It is in this identification too that she acquires her attractiveness to a man, whose Oedipus attachment to his mother it kindles into passion. How often it happens, however, that it is only his son who obtains what he himself aspired to! One gets an impression that a man's love and a woman's are a phase apart psychologically.

The fact that women must be regarded as having little sense of justice is no doubt related to the predominance of envy in their mental life; for the demand for justice is a modification of envy and lays down the condition subject to which one can put envy aside. We also regard women as weaker in their social interests and as having less capacity for sublimating their instincts than men. The former is no doubt derived from the dissocial quality which unquestionably characterizes all sexual relations. Lovers find sufficiency in each other, and families too resist inclusion in more comprehensive associations.[1] The aptitude for sublimation is subject to the greatest individual variations. On the other hand I cannot help mentioning an impression that we are constantly receiving during analytic practice. A man of about thirty strikes us as a youthful, somewhat unformed individual, whom we expect to make powerful use of the possibilities for development opened up to him by analysis. A woman of the same age, however, oftens frightens us by her psychical rigidity and unchange-

[1] [Cf. some remarks on this in Chapter XII (D) of *Group Psychology* (1921*c*), *Standard Ed.*, 18, 140.]

ability. Her libido has taken up final positions and seems incapable of exchanging them for others. There are no paths open to further development; it is as though the whole process had already run its course and remains thenceforward insusceptible to influence—as though, indeed, the difficult development to femininity had exhausted the possibilities of the person concerned. As therapists we lament this state of things, even if we succeed in putting an end to our patient's ailment by doing away with her neurotic conflict.

That is all I had to say to you about femininity. It is certainly incomplete and fragmentary and does not always sound friendly. But do not forget that I have only been describing women in so far as their nature is determined by their sexual function. It is true that that influence extends very far; but we do not overlook the fact that an individual woman may be a human being in other respects as well. If you want to know more about femininity, enquire from your own experiences of life, or turn to the poets, or wait until science can give you deeper and more coherent information.

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SEX AND CLASS IN WOMEN'S HISTORY
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"Hannah Cullwick, scrubbing." Photograph by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

1 Class and Gender in Victorian England

LEONORE DAVIDOFF

Her strong, bare, sinewy arms and rugged hands
Blacken'd with labour; and her peasant dress
Rude, coarse in texture, yet most picturesque,
And suited to her station and her ways;
All these, transfigured by that sentiment
of lowly contrast to the man she served,
Grew dignified with beauty and herself
A noble working woman, not ashamed
Of what her work had made her

A grace, a glow of quick intelligence
And ardour, such as only Nature gives
And only gives through Man. . . .

Ann Morgan's Love: A Pedestrian Poem
A. J. Munby, 1896

SYMBOLISM AND REALITY: The Creation of a World View

In investigating the connections between class, gender, and sexuality a detailed study of one case can be a useful check on either prescriptive literature or listings of household and family structure.[1] This paper attempts to show how the themes of fantasy and the manipulation of symbols in one such study can throw light on the dynamics of a whole society. But first it is necessary to look at the meaning of class and gender divisions at a more general level and at the mechanisms by which they were created.[2]

The nineteenth century was the time when traditional social boundaries were being eclipsed by the rapid development of a

market economy and the creation of a "class" society. All social relationships including gender divisions were affected by these changes. During this period, class designations came to carry gender overtones. The status characteristics associated with *gentility*, for example, differed for men and women; and the concepts *manhood* and *womanhood* which are peculiar to the nineteenth century have very different resonances. (It was on the basis of claims to *manhood* that the independent respectable workingman petitioned for both a living wage and the right of entry to full citizenship through the franchise.)

What makes the analysis of the interaction of class and gender so difficult, however, is that the same forces which produced a world view dividing the society between masculine and feminine, working class and middle (upper) class, urban and rural, also separated physicality, e.g., bodily functions in general and sexuality in particular, from the public gaze. This is an example of the privatization we have come to associate with the development of industrial capitalism and was part of a changing view of men's and women's positions in the cosmos and of their relation to Nature.

The world view of Victorian society which has been handed down to us was mostly the creation of those persons in positions of power who had the resources as well as the need to propagate their central position. Within this world view, those categories of people who are furthest away from the centers of decision making are ranked accordingly; and they are also visualized in images that emphasize their powerlessness and degradation as well as their potentially threatening and polluting effects on those persons closer to the center who exploit their labor and their persons. Middle-class Victorians, as middle-class persons in many other societies, expressed this powerlessness by associating peripheral groups with physiological origins.[3] This association was then used in a circular fashion to lock such people into menial positions for life.

> The unskilled, uncreative occupations whose incumbents order very little, handle brute matter as brute matter, express little that is vital and do not penetrate intellectually into the nature of anything, rank very low. The occupations whose incumbents handle only the detritus of man's existence and do so only by manipulating it directly come lowest.[4]

It should be remembered, however, that it is not the tasks themselves that degrade; it is the power of the dominant groups which defines what tasks are to be considered degrading and then forces the incumbents of socially constructed categories to perform these tasks.[5]

The degradation of peripheral groups was also expressed in body

images, for Victorian social commentators, including early sociologists like Herbert Spencer, often used a body metaphor in an effort to stress the organic nature of their society. This image was set in explicit contrast to both the mechanistic visions of the eighteenth century and the conflict models put forward by early Victorian radicals. According to the organic view, society was able to operate as a system because of its hierarchically ordered but interdependent parts. The adult middle-class (or aristocratic) man, representing the governing or ruling group, was seen as the Head of the social system as well as the Head of his household which was in turn a society in miniature. The Hands were the unthinking, unfeeling "doers," without characteristics of sex, age, or other identity. (The implication of the word "Hands" for workers is mercilessly castigated by Dickens in his novel *Hard Times.*) Because work was central to Victorian society, the implication was that middle-class men did brain work while the hands did menial work. Middle-class women represented the emotions, the Heart, or sometimes the Soul, seat of morality and tenderness. Women performed these functions as keepers of the Hearth in the Home, and here we find a body/house connection which figured widely in the Victorian world view.

The final section of this mental map was not as often or as openly expressed, for middle-class Victorians shrank from naming their own bodily functions. Still, Victorians visualized the "Nether Regions" of society which, by their definition, were inhabited by the criminal classes, paupers, beggars and the work-shy as "stagnant pools of moral filth" comprised of the "effluvia of our wretched cities." Historians, in fact, have recently drawn attention to the disturbing equations made by commentators, such as Mayhew, between the sanitary and the human condition, to "the cloacal imagery of the social investigators [who] pursued the social 'offal' and 'moral refuse.' "[6] Prostitutes, who were seen as the potential source of both physical and moral contagion for middle-class men, were also cast into this region. Defenders of prostitution saw it as a necessary institution which acted as a giant sewer, drawing away the distasteful but inevitable waste products of male lustfulness, leaving the middle-class household and middle-class ladies pure and unsullied. None of the inhabitants of this twilight zone could ever aspire to be included in the "body politic" but had to be hidden and controlled whenever possible. Indeed, by the third quarter of the nineteenth century, there were drives to segregate certain groups by sexual designations as well as by class labels. The separating out of a criminal class was followed by the creation of a homosexual subculture and

a hardening of the lines between professional and casual prostitution.[7]

In keeping with this body imagery, certain groups were seen to be closer to nature than the rational adult middle-class man who dominated educated opinion. These groups included not only women, children, servants, and many other elements in the working class, but also natives in the colonies and by extension all nonwhites. Their supposed affinity with nature also helps to explain the animal analogies which were often applied to them in literary writing as well as popular sayings. The position of animals, of course, had changed during the growth of industrial capitalism. From being the central source of energy and production, the "first circle of mediation between man and nature," the relationship between man and animal became much more metaphoric; and in this latter stage two themes were always stressed: what animals and man had in common and what differentiated them.[8] ("Man" is here put forward as a generic term but quite clearly the implication is that it really referred to adult men, preferably middle-class educated men.) The belief in an organic hierarchy, finally, provided the basis for scientific theories about biological divisions which were refurbished within a Darwinian evolutionary framework.[9]

Within this framework, sexuality—particularly male sexuality—became the focus of a more generalized fear of disorder and of a continuing battle to tame natural forces.[10] The social as well as psychic importance of this focus is clear in Max Weber's analysis, which considers sexuality as a non-social, even antisocial force: ". . . the drive that most firmly binds man to the animal level. . . . Rational ascetic, alertness, self-control and methodical planning of life are threatened the most by the peculiar irrationality of the sexual act which is ultimately and uniquely unsusceptible to rational organization . . . the more rationalized the rest of society becomes, the more eroticized sexuality becomes."[11] The effort of adult middle-class men to maintain their positions of power within the society as a whole and the "little kingdoms" of their own households, as well as in regard to their own sexuality, seems to have created a kind of "psychological backlash" within their own personalities. They combined excessive fears of pollution, disloyalty, and disorder from subordinates with a desperate search for a moral order which would help to control all three, as well as the immoral forces of the market. Indeed, with the help of religion, the restraint of male sexuality came to be seen as a great feat of self-control, one of the hallmarks of middle-class gentility. But this was a gentility

reserved for middle-class men. The working class and native blacks supposedly allowed their sexuality to spill out over their total lives, diverting them from the goal of achievement through work, wasting their energies and draining their vital forces. In Victorian language they displayed a lack of self-control resulting in incontinence.[12]

One well-documented solution to the problem of controlling middle-class male sexuality had been to see middle-class women (ladies), particularly within marriage (the golden chain that binds society together), as agents of salvation,[13] and with the crisis in religious faith, the image of a desexualized Madonna took on increasing saliency.[14] Madonnas, however, imply Magadalenes; and Victorian culture and social institutions provided both. A dual vision of women was already available, of course, as a legacy from classical culture, a culture inculcated through the curriculum of the grammar and public school, which emphasized hierarchical and misogynist interpretations of society.[15] The dualistic view of women was also a keystone of Christian theology, which justified the subordination of female to male on the grounds of woman's potential "carnality." Since femaleness was equated with the body, so the female must be subordinated to the male "as the flesh must be subject to spirit in the right ordering of nature."[16] Victorian women, therefore, were not only divided between working class and middle class, they were divided between "ladies" and "women," categories which signified as much gender as economic and social meaning. In viewing Victorian women it is as if we are looking at a picture through a double exposure.

Indeed, the dual vision of women, as woman and lady, becomes mixed with other polarities such as those between white and black, familiar and foreign, home and empire. In a perceptive discussion of these polarities, as expressed in literature, Cleo McNelly cites the following:

> . . . [in] the binary opposition between here and there, home and abroad . . . home represents civilization, but also order, constraint, sterility, pain and *ennui*, while native culture, the far pole of the myth, represents nature, chaos, fecundity, power and joy. The home culture is, moreover, associated always with the ability to understand by seeing, abstractly, while the other culture is associated with black, with the sense of touch, the ability to know by feeling, from within. The far pole of the tropical journey is indeed the *heart* of darkness.

At either end of this journey stand two figures, each of which has a profound mythological past: the white woman at home and her polar opposite, the

black woman abroad. These figures come from a long and well-entrenched tradition in the West. The first of them, the white woman, is not only Beatrice, she is Rowena and even Mrs. Ramsay as well. At her best she is "a star to every wand'ring bark," gentle, courteous and endowed with the immortality of the gods. At her worst she is Virginia Woolf's "angel in the house," the angel of death and sterility. In either case she tends to be sexless and *familiar* in every sense of the word. She is mother, sister or wife rather than mistress or friend.

The second figure, the black woman, is her mirror image. She is the ever-present exogamous mate, the dark lady of the sonnets, savage, sexual and eternally other. At her best she is a "natural woman," sensuous, dignified and fruitful. At her worst she is a witch, representing loss of self, loss of consciousness and loss of meaning. In either case she is most emphatically *not* familiar. She is an unknown quantity, and in her strangeness lies, both her value as an object and her ability to fascinate the white man.[17]

These are stereotypes which are deliberately cast in terms of opposites. There cannot be one without the other, and politically, one of the key functions of this particular set of oppositions is to separate white women from black women and, by extension, middle-class ladies from workingwomen to insure that they relate only through men.[18] The opposition also ensures that real women are given an identity and destiny which they can only approximate and never fulfill. Above all, it is an identity cast upon them by the dominant group, for no matter what the locus of the dual image of women—art, literature, advertising, costume, song, pornography, even architecture and landscape—it is man (middle-class educated man) who is the active observer and doer. Not only women but the whole world, extending to the farthest reaches of the Empire, becomes his object. And though in fact active manipulation of such objects was often severely constrained, in fantasy, as well as in the range of activities from anthropology to photography, middle-class men appear to be engaging in a kind of voyeurism which comes out of their privileged position as actors and doers. This voyeurism, for example, is particularly evident in the preoccupation with child pornography and child prostitution, not to mention father-daughter incest,[19] which is such a strong, if underground theme in Victorian middle-class culture.

It is striking, moreover, that middle-class men's interests in rescue work, in the plight of workingwomen, as well as pornographic imagery, focused on girls and *young* women, that it was they who carried the burden of purity and pollution, and indeed of projected male sexuality. For this obsessive concern with keeping young girls in innocence, preserving the "bloom of ignorance" is built on an

obvious paradox. If girls were "by nature" innocent why were they so easily aroused, why all the need for protection and suppression of sexual knowledge? As Gorham has shown, the attempt to combine the two views, of the girl child as totally pure but also as naturally wicked and corrupted gave rise to two powerful but opposed images, the child as redeemer (little Nell) and the child as evil incarnate,[20] a parallel to the dual vision of women in general.

This preoccupation with young women, of course, is directly related to the power structures of gender and class;[21] and it was reinforced by the legal system and such customary practices as the large discrepancies in age between middle-class husbands and wives, both in reality[22] and in fantasy.[23] It was not unknown, for example, for an upper middle-class man to raise a ward or poor relation with the intention of making her his wife when she reached her middle or late teens.[24] The cult of domesticity, moreover, removed married women, particularly mothers, from the sexual arena. Thus we have many images of older middle-class men in relation to young girls (sometimes middle class, sometimes illicitly working class) but almost no images of the older middle-class woman in relation to working-class men or younger men at all, except in the all-powerful, deliberately desexualized mother/son image.

It seems clear from the preceding argument that many of the preoccupations of the Victorian middle class and many of the dichotomous themes which pervaded their world view were laid down in childhood, even infancy, and that, even though the mechanisms are not yet completely understood, class as well as gender divisions were, partially at least, created in the nursery.[25] The dual vision of women, for example, has much to do with new divisions of labor in the middle-class home. From the end of the eighteenth century, a middle-class life-style had evolved which emphasized the importance of a well-ordered, and increasingly, a materially well-stocked home. While the responsibility for the management of the home and the emotional demands of husband and children were the domain of the wife and mother, there was a continued effort to shift the manual work, or at least the heavier, dirtier tasks onto domestic servants.[26] Of course this division of labor depended very much on the financial resources of the family as well as on the number of children. Nevertheless, there was increasing pressure to employ domestic servants in larger numbers and, as the century progressed, for more specialized functions.

Although in the eighteenth century, female and male servants had been equally employed, by the mid-nineteenth century the proportion of male servants had dropped substantially; and by the 1870s even the upper middle class was substituting women, partly

because of expense (for other occupations such as school teaching attracted men), but also because working-class definitions of masculinity and independence made domestic service less and less palatable to young men.[27]

By the 1850s there were already 750,000 women employed as residential domestic servants, and by the 1890s this figure had reached 1,300,000. The majority of these women were young and unmarried. The evidence from servants' as well as from employers' memoirs suggests that in households where there were young children, even where only one servant was employed, she would spend a good portion of her time helping to care for them. Upper middle-class ladies in households with two or three servants were unlikely to have taken any active part in the physical care of infants or toddlers.[28] It was the nurse or maid who fed, nappied, washed, dressed, potted, put to bed, and directly disciplined the infant and small child. Within the nursery domain she had total power over her charges; yet middle-class children learned very quickly that she was their inferior and that they were both, children and servants alike, subject to a higher authority. It was very often these girls and women who first awakened sexual as well as other feelings in the child.

This was the case with Freud himself, although psychoanalysts have been remarkably uninterested in the role of nursemaids. Recently, however, the importance of the social background of the maid and her position of dependency in the household combined as it was with "derived" power over the child, has been recognized in a discussion of Freud's self-analysis and confirms many of the findings in upper middle-class memoirs and autobiographies.[29] Freud's nurse was actually a maid who had worked in the family before he was born and who had other duties in addition to looking after him. This was a much more common experience than the specialized Nanny we expect from nostalgic fiction. Freud's nurse was of Czech working-class and Catholic origin so that her employment by a bourgeois, German-Jewish family implied cultural, social, economic, and ethnic inferiority, "a potent combination to be carrying into a relationship with an infant boy."[30]

In many households, the maid in charge of the children would be very young, scarcely more than a child herself; so it is not surprising that both bribes and threats were used to keep order and to control her charges and it is likely that sexual stimulation was one of the ways nursemaids amused and quieted infants. In his analysis of Freud's case, Swann notes the parallel with the American South where white infants were nursed by black Mammies and grew up into a culture that idealized white women. "The

same splitting is present, in society and psyche alike, to make the idealisation possible":[31] "White women are lovely but not carnally lovable; they are more like the Virgin Mary. But there is the maid or mammy, the black mother figure, at once the real thing and a substitute."[32]

The extent of the splitting would obviously depend on the resources of the family, e.g., space available, number of children, number of servants. It became extreme in the wealthiest households and was a particular ideal of the English upper class whose trained Nannies were famous the world over. In her memories of this division of labor, an upper middle-class woman of the 1890s said: "To me she was the perfect mother. I would not have liked her to dose me, bathe me, comfort me or hold my head when I was sick. These intimate functions were performed by Nanny or by Annie our nurserymaid. . . . I did not like mother even to see me in the bath."[33] Ideally the mother in this type of household would direct the intellectual and particularly the religious and moral upbringing of her children. She would see them only either in the nursery when it was set in order for her visit or when they were taken to see her, specially washed and dressed at the appointed "children's hour." Whether the nurse was loved, hated, or simply endured, this split remained.

R. L. Stevenson wrote of his beloved Nanny: "My second Mother, my first wife/The Angel of my Infant life."[34] Yet servants also dealt with the underside of household life, and their work was seen to be dirty and menial. They were thus more intimate and earthy than middle-class adults who were debarred from many activities because of taboos, manners, and etiquette. Children soon learned that servants talked differently, walked differently, even smelled differently. Memories, for example, are evoked of a maid's hands which smelled of dishwater when dressing a child, or of the fusty smell of servants' bedrooms. A lady in her sixties still remembered the maids' stories about their courting escapades, stories whispered in an atmosphere redolent of the exciting mingled smell of "hair oil, pantchouili and body odour."[35]

Victorians of the middle class, in contrast, were affected by a drive for personal cleanliness and sanitary reform which began early in the nineteenth century. Some middle-class Victorians even suffered from a type of obsession such as that suggested in the recent account of the life of Charles Kingsley, an active sanitary reformer who was constantly preoccupied with personal cleanliness and cold baths and who could not bear to wear clothes that were dirty.[36]

Despite this drive (or possibly even in reaction to it), the natural-

ness, even "rankness"' of working-class people, and servants in particular, could have a subtle attraction. (In the context of class domination, of course, this attraction was as falsely romantic as the opposite fears of depravity and bestiality.) A country clergyman's sons remembers the illiterate charwoman who lived in a cottage at the foot of his house, a woman he regarded as his "second mother": "She was a woman always poor, always comfortable, always free, rich and racy in her mind and in her speech, pagan and fearing neither God nor devil."[37] Middle-class children liked to slip down into the kitchen and laugh and play with the servants, cadge scraps of forbidden adult food, and listen to less inhibited conversation than they usually heard; and the direct accessibility of servants, who were not governed by the etiquette rituals of middle-class front door conventions, continued to have a particular appeal to many middle-class adults who remembered with pleasure visits to the homes of servants when they were children: "A cottage with an open door, not closed till day is done."[38] Indeed, the fascination with the alien, often forbidden but exciting, world of the servants is a common theme in middle-class memoirs:

> In the maid's room I read romances . . . bound volumes which lay concealed beneath Karolines underclothes in the bottom drawer. Without the exchange of a word, we both knew that I would not have been allowed to read them if I had asked my mother. And indeed, I read them with something of a bad conscience but it was more than that . . . there was something in these romances which made one think of tainted water that has been forgotten in a carafe; of all the foul and unwholesome smells whereby the town became familiar to my senses.[39]

This fascination with the forbidden world of the working class had obvious sexual overtones. Herman Hesse, for example, described in his novel *Demian* (1913, written immediately after his psychoanalysis), how, at least for boys, attraction to working-class life took on an explicitly sexual character. Hesse is speaking of his hero as a pubescent boy, who sees the world in terms of dark and light forces: the light being the bourgeois world of parents, sisters, law and order; while the dark world, the world of his awakening sexual desires, inextricably draws him to the maidservant. The equation of working class, sexuality, disorder, and guilt has has been well-established. In fact, not only symbolically but physically and often with covert social sanctions, the young servant was available to the middle-class male adolescent. The first sexual experience in the long and notorious career of the protagonist of *My Secret Life* takes the form of just such an encounter (although, this incident, as he recounts it can be described more as a rape than as a seduction). And there are enough reminiscences by domestic servants to confirm the characteristic nature of these relationships.

For middle-class children, these social divisions and their erotic overtones were also reflected in a spatial view of their world—a view which started with their own bodies, extended to the houses where they lived and eventually to their village, town, or city. Just as society was often symbolized by a body metaphor, so house and body images were conflated. Within the house the child was safe and warm in the cozy nursery or sitting room with the glowing hearth at its center, an image very often associated with the mother. The servants, on the other hand, lived and worked in the dark underground parts of the house or slept in the inaccessible, often spooky attics. Their territory was the "back passages" (nursery euphemism for anus) where the working parts of the household machine were visible and where waste and rubbish were removed. Such images carried over into adulthood and help to explain the often irrationally divided and inefficient design of middle-class housing.

Thus spatial segregation was associated both with control over servants (and by extension over other members of the working class) and control over polluting aspects of the body. Control over one's own body became, in turn, associated with both the ability and the right to control and dominate others. The natural extension of this bodily domination was, of course, legitimate physical punishment; the right to beat or strike a servant was only removed in the 1860s[40] while the legitimacy of wifebeating, not to mention physical punishment of children, remained unchallenged long into the twentieth century.

Middle-class children not only learned that certain social spaces belonged to certain social groups, they also learned to use their bodies to express class and gender boundaries. Little ladies and gentlemen did not sit on steps; they stood absolutely straight; they did not whistle, scuff, or slouch. By imitating middle-class adults they learned habits of command through silent body language, through the way they looked at people, through tone of voice as well as accent.

Servants in return, showed deference in the way they used their bodies, a point also observed by the children of the house. Servants stood when spoken to and kept their eyes cast down, they moved out of a room backwards, curtsied to their betters, and were generally expected to efface themselves; doing their work and moving about the house so as not to be visible or audible to their employers. In an extreme case they were made to turn their faces to the wall when the employer passed by.[41] One instruction

book for young servants devotes a whole section to *Standing and Moving* and shows the extra burden which the need to express deference placed on the already heavily worked servingmaid class:

> I was once in the nursery bedroom when Anna came in panting with a can of water. As I spoke to her she sank down on a chair saying "Excuse me, ma'am, I am so tired," but I could not excuse her. She acted very rudely. It would have been but a small effort to stand for a few moments, however tired she might be and girls who are not capable of such an effort are not fit for service.[42]

In the street, servants, male or female, walked a few paces behind their master or mistress. They walked on the outside of the pavement if escorting a lady in a rough or dirty street, just as a middle-class man would have, to act as her protector.

Servants also contributed to the growing child's mental map of their social geography outside the home: "The servants of the house made windows for us into the outside world."[43] After all, one of the primary tasks of servants in even lower middle-class homes was to take the children out for walks and the small child's first view of the neighborhood may have been very much through servants' eyes. Many of these children were first- or second-generation suburban dwellers as the middle class started to move away from the city centers where factories poured out both wealth and filth. Servants passed back and forth between the "good," clean, orderly but dull suburbs and the "bad," dirty, disorganized but exciting center. A schoolmaster's daughter living in a south London suburb expressed this feeling in her attitude towards Deptford, the dockland home of the general servant girl who had charge of her: "This name meant for me unimaginable squalor. I was never taken there; somehow I was brought up to think of it as dark, dirty, common, low. Yet I hugged a secret fascination with the very idea of it."[44]

Without claiming some sort of implicit functionalism it is still possible to observe that the housing, the life-style, and the child-rearing practices of the middle class helped to create and maintain a structure of authority and a personality suited to the group which was instrumental in running the business, of governing, and reaping, the rewards of Victorian society. This is not to deny that the structures so created did not produce major contradictions both at the individual and group level, especially in the realm of sexuality.[45]

Freud, for example, believed that it was almost impossible for the "love of civilized man" to avoid the split between affection and sexuality because of the need to avoid direct erotic attractions to the mother (incest). For him the whole sphere of love remained divided into sacred and profane (animal) love: "Where they love they do not desire and where they desire they cannot love." For him it is this which underlies the double standard, including the tendency of men in the highest classes to choose a woman of a lower class as a permanent mistress or even a wife, in the need for a debased object, since the "sexual act is seen as something degrading which defiles and pollutes not only the body."[46] This theory takes for granted the existence of women of the lower class and, therefore, does not need to explain the stage at which they enter the individual drama or any active role that they might play. Ultimately, as with most nineteenth-century thought, it rests on a conception of society in which hierarchical divisions of both class and gender are natural. The relationship of master to servant, of men to women, that is, was seen as natural and organic in contrast to the newer and much more threatening relation of employer and workman.

Natural in this context has two related meanings: the relationship was taken for granted; it was a given. It was also part of nature as opposed to the civilized, the man-made, which was unnatural. Some sensitive men struggled against a world view which posed such polar opposites and especially which split the world into masculine and feminine, or into lady and woman. Edward Carpenter, E. M. Forster, and William Morris, for example, in their lives and in their writing, have given us a glimpse of the anguished efforts needed to break through the constraints, conscious and unconscious, which it produced. The minor poet and man of letters who is the subject of this study, A. J. Munby, also senses this dilemma posed by the dual vision of women as the following passage from his diary, written in his characteristically sententious style, illustrates. He is visiting with friends in an old house in Kent.

> It became necessary for me to retire for a space; but the men-servants had gone to bed, and amongst the intricate passages [sic] of the old house I could nowhere find the spot I wanted. So, encountering in the hall the waiting maid, a ruddy domestic damousel, I had no recourse but to ask her the way. An unpleasant process! With much hesitation and awkwardness I strove by delicate circulocations to hint to her my needs: but the girl's rude mind could not comprehend them—she looked at me with respectful wonder, and at last I was obliged to say bluntly "could you tell me, where is the water closet?" She would blush, I half thought and stammer, and I should regret having said it. Not at all! it was only the reflex of one's own training that made one think so.
>
> [The maid takes him to the door of the water closet]
> Significant of several things. Not certainly of vulgarity or any culpable coarseness, rather of a rude simplicity and innocence of shame. We are brought up

to ignore these ultimate necessities of nature, and to be animals only by stealth: but your housemaid has had quite a different schooling in knowing that such things exist, sees no harm in speaking of what she knows.[47]

ARTHUR J. MUNBY AND HANNAH CULLWICK: A Double Portrait[48]

It is one thing to identify a world view and its possible sources, but another to analyze the way in which it was incorporated into everyday life: "People are living in the middle of their cosmology, down in amongst it; they are energetically manipulating it, evading its implications in their own lives if they can, but using it for hitting each other and forcing one another to conform to something they have in mind."[49]

While one should be fully aware of the power of symbols and images, it would be a mistake to see these phenomena purely in symbolic terms. Fear of pollution and obsession with dirt and degradation had a very real basis. Victorian cities were filthy with soot, smoke, mud, and appalling muck heaps lying in the streets; and cholera was a very real threat to life. Indeed, the effort to enforce sanitary reform had to start with the middle class before moving on to controlling the habits of the working class.[50] Similarly, the images of women as domestic beings produced feedback which restricted their lives to the extent that many of them *were* insipid, underexercised, narrow-minded and neurasthenic.

In the record left by two obscure Victorians, however, it is possible to catch glimpses of the world view I have outlined and of the way these divisions operated in practice since one of the pair was male and upper middle class and the other was female, not only of a working-class but also of a rural background and a domestic servant. She was one of the great army of working-class women who did, in fact, spend a good deal of their lives in direct face-to-face contact with the middle class. (Both in reality and fantasy it was young female servants who bore the direct personal brunt of class interaction. Independent workingmen could protect their manhood by remaining within social contexts of their own kind and it was they who were the first to confront employers as members of a *class*.) A detailed examination of such a relationship can show that the private lives, even obsessions of two individuals, far from being simply psychological quirks or even aberrations, flowed directly from the social situation of these two typical individuals.

The main source for understanding that relationship is the private diary, letters, drawings, and photographs of a minor poet and writer, A. J. Munby, and the companion diary of his disciple, servant, and eventually his wife, Hannah Cullwick. By Munby's instructions the diaries were locked up until 1950 by which time, as he had foreseen, the shock and degradation of such a story would have died away. Munby's diary, which he kept regularly from 1859 to 1898 with scattered entries after that date, runs to millions of words. In addition, there are about 800 letters as well as dozens of drawings and photographs. (Because of his special interest in working women, the collection has already become known as a valuable source for historians.) It is interesting to note that although the content of the diary is so unusual, the form is conventional for its period.[51]

A. J. Munby's avocation (and private obsession) in making encounters with, observing and collecting information on, working girls and women was not as unusual as it may appear at first sight. The passion for collecting information on and statistics about the working class, particularly working-class women, has a streak of voyeurism which can be sensed behind the work of a journalist such as Mayhew, as well as in the detailed accounting of moral depravity in the pages of staid publications such as the *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*. This voyeurism also appears in both the lives and writings of men like George Gissing and Somerset Maugham. "Rescue" work among fallen women or simply the compulsion to nocturnal wanderings in search of conversation with "women of the streets," which figure in the lives of men like Gladstone, have some close affinity to the sexual scoring and collecting described at length in the notorious diary, *My Secret Life*.[52] ("Walter," the anonymous author, came from much the same background as Munby, was also born in the mid-1820s, and also had an obscure job in the civil service which allowed him the same time and freedom of action for his pursuits.) While "Walter" was concerned with strictly sexual encounters, Munby was collecting examples of women at work; but the pattern of wandering from place to place in search of encounters, the emotional urgency and the sense of culmination with each "find" lies below the surface of both diaries whose form is similar.

Unlike Mayhew or Booth, Munby's observations were not commissioned by any official body nor were they intended to answer public questions or even written for publication. Rather, as with sexual diaries such as *My Secret Life* or the diary of the homosexual, A. J. Symonds, Munby seems to have been using the diary to construct a meaningful identity by using themes from his culture—both those that were explicitly admired and those that were forbidden—and reinterpreting them to fit his own psychic structure. It is only in his poetry that he expressed some of his views to the public, if in a somewhat muted form (see Appendix).

Arthur Joseph Munby was born in 1828, the eldest child of a York solicitor and the daughter of a wealthy clergyman. He had been brought up from infancy by a nurse called Hannah Carter who remained the faithful servant of the family for twenty-eight years. Six younger siblings were born in the span of ten years and his mother, not surprisingly, was delicate to the point of spending much of her time lying on a sofa, weak in health and with a tendency to become hysterical. Munby always viewed her with exceptional awe and love. He described her as charmingly "old fashioned," with a "fair delicate face and golden-auburn hair and dainty figure." He remembered her best for her pious, gentle way, as one who "believed as devoutly in my father as he believed in God and Christ." Her whole being was in the affections, "her husband first and her children next . . . her love was so tremulous and tender, and her health so delicate always, that each of us felt it might kill her, if he went into the army or navy, for instance, or went away very far or very long."[53] With such a mother, no disturbing or distasteful subjects could ever have been broached. Sexuality, much less any bodily functions, would have been completely taboo.

The family had an assured social position and Munby, although having a provincial and country childhood, received a traditional middle-class boy's education first at a local private school supplemented by private tutoring from a local clergyman and then at Cambridge. Unfortunately we know little more than this about his early life. He became a barrister despite his distaste for the law, probably in deference to his father and his position as eldest son. However, he did not practice law but moved to London where he lived "in chambers," e.g., in a set of rooms within one of the Inns of Court. Here he remained for the rest of his life, partly supported financially by his father. At the age of thirty-one, he found a position with the Ecclesiastical Commission, work he disliked for the most part but felt obliged to take in order to have some financial independence. Despite his middle-class Victorian belief in work, therefore, in his own life, work was always a burden and a distraction.

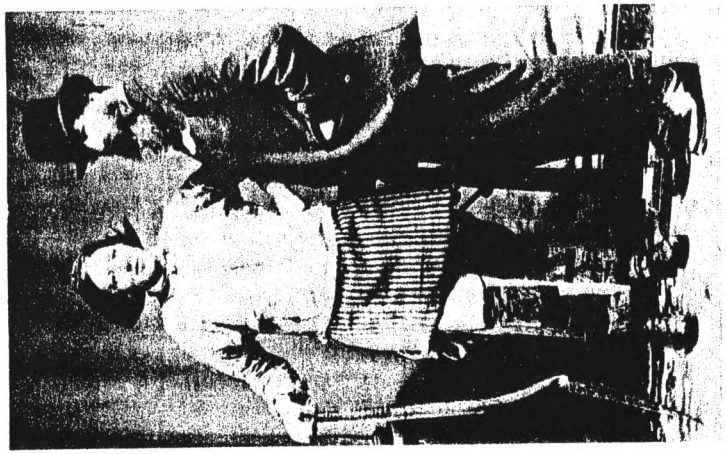
In his lifetime, A. J. Munby was known only in a small circle. He passed his life as an undistinguished but respectable civil servant, teacher, amateur poet and artist, who was on the fringes of both the Pre-Raphaelite and Christian Socialist circles, particularly through his teaching for the Working Men's College. His real interest lay in his self-created avocation, the observation and collection of the lives of workingwomen. Although he was in no way a radical, he did occasionally protest at moves to keep women out of manual work even to the extent of heading a delegation to parliament on behalf of the collier girls of Wigan.[54]

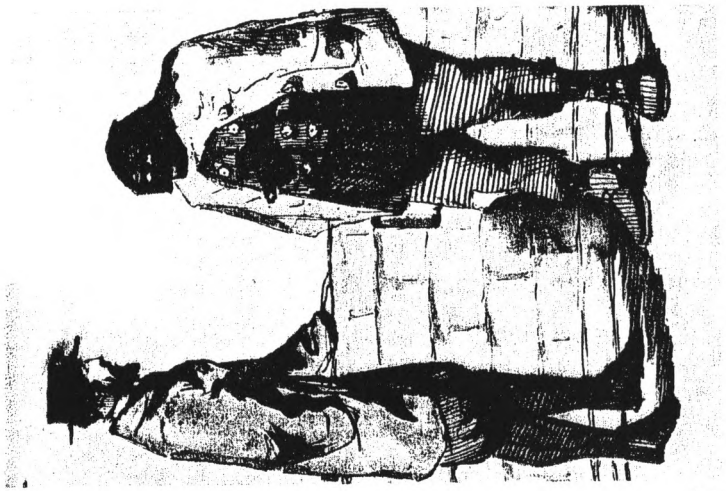
For the most part, however, he enjoyed the modest comforts of a professional bachelor, strolling through London to look on at the building of the Embankment; to dinner at his Club; or to play writing games at the Pen and Pencil Society; to a late supper in a friend's rooms in London's Inn where politics, art, and writing were discussed; meandering home at 4 a.m. amid Covent Garden porters; watching, talking to anyone in the street, walking anywhere with perfect ease. His diary thus emphasizes the freedom of action enjoyed by a middle-class man, even on a small but assured income, in contrast to the lack of freedom imposed on middle-class women.

His first love was for what he persisted in calling "peasant" or "country wenches." He idealized the rural and the out-of-doors, which may be a partial explanation for his fascination with a ruddy countenance and suntanned skin. This rural nostalgia, of course, was widespread among the recently urbanized Victorian middle class.[55] In his country wanderings Munby sought out farm girls; the "flither girls" of the North East coastal region who made their living by being lowered over the edges of cliffs to collect sea bird's eggs and limpets; and, above all, the "pit brow lasses" who worked in the coalfields sifting cinders and hauling carts at the pit surface. They not only worked outside in a primarily man's world but they were covered in coal dust and at least in Wigan, wore trousers.

In the city he favored women in outdoor occupations: flower sellers, milkmaids, and prostitutes. He was particularly interested in circus women and acrobats and made a large collection of photographs of these performers.[56] Although he sought out entertainment places used by female clerks and shop assistants, these girls were approaching too near to the lady to really attract him: "Commend me to the honest roughness of a solid maid of all work rather than to the hybrid fine ladyism of Miss Swann and Edgar"[57] (a large clothing store in the West End). It was not work or even financial independence per se which he found so fascinating in women, but menial work. In common with many other upper middle-class Victorians, not absolutely sure of their own position, he disliked those who tried to rise above themselves. In a typical passage describing one of his country rambles he contrasts his "ruddy farm servants and true peasant women" with the upper servants he saw at North Repps Hall, "lean, pale-faced insolent looking hussies in would-be lady's clothes."[58]

Munby's attitude illustrates the appeal of working-class openness which we have observed as a theme laid down in childhood:





Symbolism and reality: Watercolor sketch by A. J. Munby of himself and a colliery girl; photograph of same (photographer unknown). Both reproduced from Derek Hudson, Munby: *Man of Two Worlds: The Life and Diaries of A. J. Munby 1828-1910* (London: Abacus, 1974). By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

Nothing is more striking than the contrast of behaviour which even courteous gentlemen exhibit in dealing with a lady or a quasi-lady and in dealing with a servant or other labouring woman. To the lady, you are all deference and smiles: you smooth your phrases and put away all allusions to things coarse or common, you do things for her, you would not hear of her doing things for you. To the servant, you are civil, indeed, but you speak plainly and frankly to her about things which may not be mentioned to a lady; you call her by her Christian name though you never saw her before and expect her to call you Sir in return; you order her about and expect or allow her to fetch and carry for you as indeed it is her calling to do so.[59]

Deep down in the great shifting mass of the people, their own histories and names have for them nothing private or sacred. . . . They are accustomed to be close questioned about themselves by mistresses and to be called "Anne" or "May" by anyone who chooses to address them. To be asked bluntly "What is your name?" or "How old are you" by a stranger, does not seem to them at all offensive or impertinent.[60]

Munby does not acknowledge that this quality he so much admires was at least partly a result of his position as a dominating middle-class man, who for sixpence could feel a girl's palm and for a shilling could take her to a photographer to have her picture taken in whatever pose he chose to put her. It was economic necessity combined with the service role, which made his "wenches" so available. It is noticeable that Munby seldom tried to approach a Lancashire mill girl or even a London factory worker.

Because of this position of economic and social power we know a considerable amount about the middle-class, particularly male, world view. We know very little about the way working-class children, particularly domestic servants, were molded by the social structure into which they were born. This makes Hannah Cullwick's diary, with its detailed record of childhood memories, conditions of work and work performed, wages, hours, recreations, relationships among fellow servants, and many other details, a unique and precious document. However, it must be remembered that she was writing it for Munby's eyes alone, a further way in which he could dominate and even "create" her life. Thus, the diary has to be interpreted with caution. Still, through a reconstruction of her relationship to Munby, as interpreted by both of them, it may be possible to gain some insight into the construction and acceptance of deferential interaction based on both class and gender, an interaction which female servants must have carried back into the working class when they married and had children.

Hannah Cullwick was born in 1833 and raised in Shropshire, but through her work as a servant she came to London when she was in

her late teens. Except for her relationship to Munby her life was typical of literally millions of women of the period. Hannah started in service when she was eight years old, which was not atypical for the 1830s. Her rural background is important as an element in her acceptance of the status quo because there were no alternatives to some form of personal service for her or her family. Her father had been both a farm servant and worked in a gentlemen's stables. Her maternal grandmother had been in service before marriage and returned to residential service after she was widowed. Her mother had been a lady's maid and companion to the Lady at the Hall near their village of Shiffnal. This lady became Hannah's godmother and had wished Hannah, as the eldest child, to be named after her, Anna Maria Dorothea, but Hannah's mother thought that this was too pretentious for one of her station. Hannah's first memory is of a visit to their cottage by the butler from the Hall when she was five years old. He came with gifts of a Bible for Hannah and a print dress for her Mother, and he summoned them to come up to the Hall: "I remember it because it seemed so grand to me and i polished my shoes as well as ever i could and i trotted up by Mother as fast as possible o' purpose to see my godmother who was a *lady.*"[61] The little Hannah curtisied as her mother had taught her and the lady kissed her, gave her cake and wine and a toy. Later, this all-powerful and beneficent lady sent her special clothes and paid her fees for the Charity School which Hannah attended from the age of five to eight, the only formal schooling she ever had.

Her first employer was a farmer who was a friend of her mother's. Here her position was much like that of an extra daughter, but one who had certain special duties to perform. The family was kind to her; she was taught to cook and sew; the farmer took her fishing and opened a savings account for her. This kind of gradual introduction to the authority system of service in which discipline was enforced first through the mother and then often through female teachers, relations, or friends is one of the factors which made it possible to maintain the institution of domestic service for so long and make it seem so "natural" even to those who were subordinated and who gained very little in real terms from their positions.[62]

By the time she was fourteen, Hannah had left the farmer's family which could no longer afford her higher wages. After a short spell as a "pot" girl at the local Red Lion pub (a position of which neither her mother nor the farmer and his family approved), she was sent to the Vicarage at Ryton to be nurserymaid under a Nanny to eight children. This position meant a heavy load

of cleaning, fires to be made, bath water to be carried up and down, as well as children to look after. She had only been there a month when fever struck her home village. Her mother wrote her of her father's death but no one told her of her mother's death a fortnight later until a neighbor happened to call by the Vicarage. Although it was only three miles away from her home, Hannah was not allowed to go, even to see what had happened to her younger brothers and sisters (a ban possibly laid down because of the fear of infection but also to maintain discipline.) Whatever the cause of the prohibition, Hannah was devastated. Her goal of earning money to send to her mother which had made her situation bearable was suddenly gone: "i *thought* it *was* no use tho i ax'ed to go and all my strength seemed gone." She was ordered to go back to the schoolroom to start work immediately.[63]

The total power of the employing class over her existence was again brought home to Hannah, then about fifteen, in her next place of third under-housemaid in an aristocratic household. She had been very proud to be taken on in this position and enjoyed working in the beautiful surroundings, learning how to make a bed and "do out" the long gallery and great rooms. One sunny day, she and the second under-housemaid were outside cleaning the sixteen copper kettles used daily by the household: "Maria and me was cleaning our kettles in the yard and *playing* over it, for we was young things; and My Lady, see'd us out o' the nursery window and sent the housekeeper to give us warning."[64] Hannah's pleas were useless and she was sacked on the spot. She then had to take a job as scullery maid in another large household nearby: "i couldn't help crying when i come to clean the stew pan and great spits and dripping pan and live only in a rough out-house next the kitchen," a shed with no window which she could only reach through the coal hole.[65]

Hannah learned at a very early age that her world was made up of powerful middle-class and upper-class people and that only her strength to labor gave her a footing in that world. She was particularly vulnerable having been orphaned early but this was by no means an unusual state at this period. In any case, servant memoirs emphasize that their own families, almost always under pressure for income and house room, could do little for them. There was also the question of sexual power. In the course of her service in country houses, visiting gentlemen as well as menservants, tried to "make a pass" at Hannah. In one instance when she has been offered a ride home in a carriage with one of these gentlemen, she was set down with him "in a lonely spot" to walk the rest of the way home. He tried to kiss her and she threatened him: "if you

offer to touch me again I'll do something you won't like, so you go your way and i'll go mine."[66] Like many working-class girls she learned early in life that strength of body and personality were her chief resources for both work and self-protection.[67]

Like so many girls, particularly of rural origin, Hannah accepted her position (not for nothing did employers prefer girls fresh from the countryside, "uncorrupted" by urban life). She tried to gain a sense of dignity and worth both in the work she did and through the love she craved. With Munby she achieved that sense of work and love although it was on his terms and ultimately at a very high price. Running throughout her diary, however, there is a sense that the system as it stood had cheated her, that the pious platitudes about the dignity of service were not believed in even by middle-class employers. Over the years, the tone of her diary subtly changes as her life experience and education through Munby widened her horizons. In one of the very last entries she made, after she had been married for about nine months, and thirty-five years after her first experience of residential domestic service Hannah wrote:

> I went out to service too soon—before I really understood the meaning of it—and at the Charity School i was taught to curtsey to the ladies and gentlemen and it seem'd to come natural to me to think them *entirely* over the lower class and if it was our place to bow and be at their bidding and I've never got out o' that feeling somehow.[68]

IMAGES, GAMES, AND TRANSFORMATIONS

In 1854, when A. J. Munby was twenty-five he met Hannah Cullwick, aged twenty-one, on a London street. In his usual manner he struck up a conversation with her. She combined all the qualities he prized most highly: she was from a country background; strong and robust but good-looking; a maid-of-all-work, but exceptually intelligent and lively. From then on she was the center of his emotional life as he was for hers. For nineteen years until their marriage they were involved with each other, although during all that time he remained a nominal bachelor living at 6 Fig Tree Court, the Temple, and she living in various residential servant situations. It is not clear from the sources we have whether their's was, in conventional terms, a sexual relationship and there are some indications that Munby may have been impotent. In any case, there were no children nor indications that Hannah ever thought she was pregnant, a situation which might have totally altered their relationship.[69] Munby and Hannah finally married

"Hannah carrying slop pails." Photograph by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

in 1873 when he was forty-four and she was thirty-nine. She lived with him for just over four years as his servant, not openly as his wife. After a period of increasing tension in their relationship, she returned to her people in Shropshire and lived for the rest of her life in a cottage provided for her by Munby where he visited her regularly. Her relatives and friends accepted him; while his middle-class circle, with the exception of two of his closest friends, never knew of her existence.

Soon after their relationship began, they started a series of games and playacting in which they used the differences between them to emphasize their love and devotion. They were intensely aware of the impression that they made on other people. In public, Hannah would act the perfect servant, demurely walking behind Munby, carrying his heavy luggage, calling him Sir and meekly obeying his orders. He would act especially "masterful," give her ostentatious tips, and send her off to do his bidding. Later they would meet in his rooms and giggle like children over the incident reveling in the "if they only knew" aspect of their situation. This is, of course, not an unknown phenomenon:

> On occasions, individuals will come together and find that they share each other's bizarre fantasies. The fantasy ceases to be a personal mental resource to be drawn upon intermittently during the course of everyday life; now it can be elaborated with the help of another and may shift into the centre of our lives. The classical description of this phenomenon is *folie à deux*: a situation in which two individuals actively cultivate their extreme fantasy to the point at which scripts may be assembled.[70]

The point about Hannah and Munby's "scripts" is that they were written around the theme of class and gender differences played out through games of mastery and submission.

In following these themes through the diaries, it becomes clear that Munby's inversion of the usual Victorian stereotypes suggests the possibility of transformations, of passing back and forth from one "side" to another at will. Black becomes white, degradation becomes love, masculine becomes feminine, working class becomes genteel. All this happens at the will of the middle-class male protagonist who creates the situation and engineers the transformation. Through the use of his position as an upper middle-class man, Munby was able to find a partner and carry through into reality at least some of these fantasies. Hannah, although much more clear-sighted about the reality of her own situation, was driven by her economic and emotional needs to willingly act as this partner. She was, indeed, very jealous of his interest in one or two of his charity cases, particularly the "girl without the nose" but seems to have been quite accepting of his friendship with women of his own class.

Most of the themes which preoccupied Munby, and to a lesser extent Hannah, clustered around the question of dominance and subordination, strength and weakness, autonomy and dependence. The dichotomies and contrasts allied to these subjects are characteristic of much Victorian culture: respectable/not respectable, lady/woman, pure/impure, clean/dirty (and by extension white/black), indoor/outdoor, fairness/suntanned or ruddy (blushing was thought to be a sign of sexual arousal in middle-class women), clothed/uncovered skin, and above all, of course, feminine/masculine. Many of these themes are related either directly or indirectly to the major Victorian preoccupation with *work*: what was it, who did it, where did they do it. This produced another set of contrasts: work/leisure, work/home, manual work/brain work.

Connected to both sets of contrasts and in keeping with the body imagery we have already mentioned, *hands* take on a special significance and play a central role in both class and gender imagery, e.g., "the language of gloves." They also carry an explicitly sexual connotation for Munby, and one would guess, for many other Victorians as well.[71] White, dainty hands indicated gentility as well as femininity. They were symbolic of inner breeding but also of life-style. George Augustus Sala who was a contemporary and friend of Munby's, a man-about-town and commentator on the social scene (as well as a connoisseur and collector of erotica) wrote a novel in which the middle-class hero rescues a "fallen woman" who turns out to be a lady by birth. He has literally pulled her out of a horse trough and takes her to a cafe where he listens to her story: "As she spoke she laid her right hand on the filthy table cloth. The woman's hand was, considering her stature, small, but the fingers were long and tapering, the nails, although grimy, filbert-shaped. Otherwise it was a handsome hand, and very very white."[72]

When Munby tried to persuade Hannah to dress as a gentlewoman he wanted her to wear gloves, but she resisted saying "they baffle my hands so." He quotes this statement approvingly, however, for contrary to what had usually been considered attractive, Munby is fascinated by, even addicted to looking at, touching (at times cutting the skin from) large, rough, red, work-hardened hands of workinggirls. With monotonous repetition Munby's diary entries and poems dwell on the motif of hands, their color, shape, and texture:

> For she is still a working wench
> and sits with hands still bare[73]

Hannah deliberately rubbed the bars of grates and cleaned knives with her bare hands, despite the unpleasant feeling, in order to harden them in a paean of love for Munby, expressed through work.

"Hands." Photograph by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

A similar, although slightly less compelling preoccupation of Munby's was with women who either had large masculine-looking feet or who wore heavy boots; in fact Hannah often wore his old boots. He writes approvingly of a colliery girl: "Her ponderous boots with iron on the sole, shod like a horses hoofs." Here Munby connects this image with one of his favorite animal analogies. Small, dainty feet and hands, of course, were the pride of middle-class Victorian women and figure widely in descriptions of feminine attractiveness, a physical characteristic evoked in characters from Dora, the wife in *David Copperfield*, to Meg in *Little Women*, or Rosamund in *Middlemarch*. This concern extended to doubts about workingwomen who did not conform to the expected distinction. In 1862, a private factory welfare officer for a silk firm

wrote "I immediately remarked the small delicately formed hands of the weavers, and I have seen the smallness to be, in a domestic point of view, a great disadvantage to women in that condition of life. . . ."[74]

The animal/human analogy which Munby used for his colliery girl pervades his diary. It indicates lowliness and degradation, but also a brute strength and dumb loyalty expressed through love and service. In his poetry, girls and women are compared to cows, horses, dogs, and in the case of the "ebony slave girl" (who eats on all fours out of a bowl on the ground), even an elephant. Note that all these are examples of domesticated animals who have been "trained" and "broken in" by man. This analogy is, as we have seen, by no means unique to Munby. The comparison of the "handling" of women to horses has a long history in literature about the relations between the sexes.[75] In some writers, middle-class women may appear as "spirited fillies," but for Munby the domesticated animal evocation is more often expressed in a fondness for watching women standing and working in lowly positions. He was a firm believer in the importance of curtsying, for example; and he finds the young milkwoman he saw stooping to take up her new yoke looking "proud as a young cart horse." He imposes the same image on a servant washing the kitchen floor in a country inn: "I spoke to her first, she did not understand me: but leaning on her hands which were spread upon the wet brick pavement like forefeet . . . she scrubbed away busily under tables and dresser, folks stepping over her whenever they came in her way."[76] Fascination with love expressed through drudgery, dirt, defilement, and even disfigurement reaches its height (or depth) in a poem which no publisher would accept. It combines all these themes with one of Munby's favorite locations, a coal mining area. In this poem his heroine works underground and is eventually hideously disfigured in a mine explosion. (Coal miners had a general fascination for Victorians. They were the troglodytes who produced the power on which the whole edifice of comfortable middle-class life rested but they were hidden away under the ground.) Munby's imaginary pit lass:

> . . . thinks it sweet to walk all day upon her hands and feet.
> With a full wain behind! To rejoice in being a quadruped?
> To give her voice for such degradation?
> Let her go, disgusting creature!
> Ah! You little know the ways of women and the rights of love.[77]

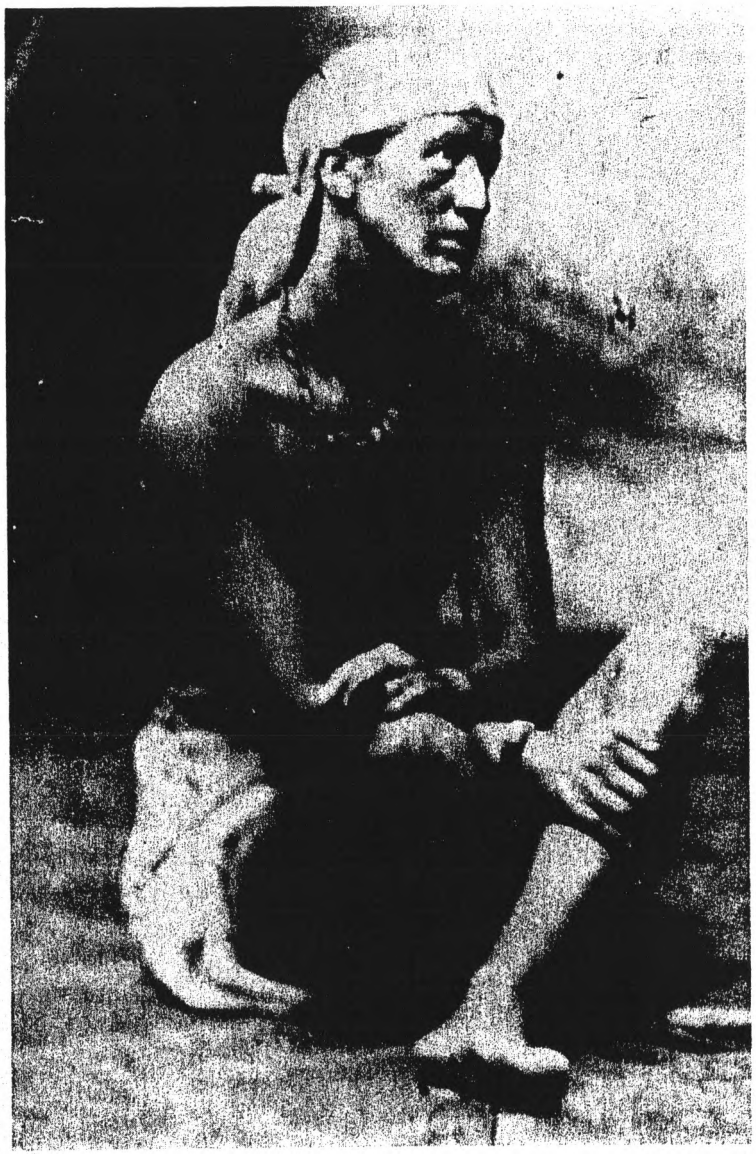
The special importance of dirt or blackness for servants should be obvious. They spent a great deal of their lives maintaining clean-

liness in middle-class homes. Their most important job was to remove dirt and waste: to dust; empty slop pails and chamber pots; peel fruit and vegetables; pluck fowl; sweep and scrub floors, walls, and windows; remove ash and cinders; black lead grates; wash clothes and linen.[78]

The equation of servants with dirt and pollution, however, and the equation of dirt with blackness had particular overtones in mid-Victorian England, as some of the literary symoblism cited has already indicated. In Western culture blackness has always carried strong symbolic meaning: "being the antagonist of white which is God, it becomes the symbol of personified evil."[79] From the sixteenth century onwards, this symbolism was enlarged by its associations with the Dark Continent and the slavery of black peoples.[80] As Jordan points out, embedded in the concept of blackness was its direct opposite—whiteness: "Every white will have its black." White and black connotated purity and filthiness, virginity and sin, virtue and baseness, beauty and ugliness. From the Elizabethans onwards, whiteness had been the color of perfect human beauty, especially female beauty, implying the desirability of a fair rose and white complexion.[81] It should not come as a shock, therefore, that Hannah's pet name for Munby was Massa, that is, what they took to be the Negro slave's word for Master. Three years after they met she began to wear a leather strap around her wrist and a chained collar with lock around her neck to which Munby held the key. He particularly enjoyed seeing her face and arms blackened—in his phrase "in her dirt."

Again, these associations were commonplace in the Victorian era. In the classic children's book, *The Water Babies*, written by Munby's friend and contemporary, Charles Kingsley, the climactic scene shows Tom, chimney sweep boy, leaping out from the chimney covered in soot, "looking like a little black gorilla," into the spotless white bedroom of Ellie, the golden-haired middle-class child. Tom has to be purified by dying and becoming a water baby, that is, washed clean and returned to a nonsexual infant innocence before he can join Ellie in heaven.[82]

Natives, particularly African slaves, were also associated with nakedness and by implication were heavily sexualized in contrast to buttoned-up, controlled Englishmen. Showing oneself uncovered and dirty in public was thus considered especially degrading. In their memoirs, several servants emphasized the humiliation they felt at having to kneel (thus showing legs and petticoats) to scrub the front doorsteps and paths every morning, open to the stares of passersby, the whistles and importunings of men and boys. The symbolic meaning of cleaning in public helps to explain the use



"Hannah as a slave." Photograph by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

of "step girls" by those who could not afford any other domestic services. Hannah reported that the mistress she served in summer when there were lodgers and visitors in the house "told me she would try to do with no servants in winter–only for the errands and for cleaning the front door steps–she says 'i *cannot* do them–and i felt sorry for her–i can do them and always do everywhere i like, but she seem'd to think it degrading and of course it would be to her." She added, "it wants nerve to stand or kneel in the street before everybody–feeling that you're despised and degraded before them all."[83]

It is only by understanding these symbolic meanings that the fantasy games which Hannah and Munby played can be appreciated:

I got up early, for Massa was coming at ½ past eight to see me clean the steps and do the *sign* of my 'lowness' like i did awhile ago . . . and i wanted to be black from doing' the grate as well . . . i did the dining room fire–got my arms blacked and wiped my mouth and nose across with my black hand . . . I washed the doorsteps and flags and when I saw Massa coming I got the door mat out and shook it well in the road and then i laid it on the causeway (sidewalk) & knelt on all fours and swept it well o' both sides wi the hand brush & last of all i knelt an wiped my face on the dirty mat in front of all the folks what pass'd by and Massa was looking on from a few doors up . . . & then i rubbed my face on it & put my lips again it & i thought now i was one o' the lowest drudges as could be–but Massa loved me & i love my work, both for its and also Massa's sake & i felt so happy.[84]

The power to create or transform another human being and in so doing to reaffirm upper middle-class masculine identity provided, as we have seen, the compelling attraction of rescue work as well as the rationale for the phenomenon of the child bride. In "Susan: A Poem of Degrees," 1893, it is Munby, thinly disguised as the hero, who speaks of creating "the new Pygmalion":

> He look'd at her: a Juno covered in coal,
> With lustrous eyes and firm devoted soul;
> Goddess within, beneficent and brave,
> Yet outwardly a negress and a slave

She flings herself at his feet. He raises her up (a favorite phrase in "rescue work") and "kisses her foul lips" until they "again grew ruddy from their black eclipse." There are, indeed, several photographs in the Munby collection of collier girls in their filthy, masculine pit clothes with the same girl neatly dressed in her Sunday best, looking like any other respectable working-class woman in crinoline, bonnet, and shawl. Hannah was also photographed as slave,

"Hannah, scrubbing steps." Photograph by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

drudge, neat serving maid, middle-class lady and "angel." After their marriage she would work in the basement kitchen in Fig Tree Court all day but sit with him, "dainty in black silk" in the evening. "Is she not a servant during the day, and a lady in the evening? and fulfils either part so well, that for the time being she seems incapable of the other."[85]

For Munby, as we have seen, one of the most important transformations was the crossing of sex lines. The more sharply that gender was differentiated in dress, looks, voice, walk, coloring, and size, the more intriguing and exciting passing through or reversing these boundaries could be. Victorian writing, costume, and visual imagery constantly emphasizes the largeness, hardness, and muscularity of men as opposed to the small fragility and roundness of middle-class women. The Victorians took every opportunity to emphasize and create differences between the sexes just as they did between the working-class woman and middle-class lady. Or in Munby's phrase the shoulders of the girl farm servant, who he compares to a young guardsman, are three foot broad and "square, massive, muscular, made for work, just as those sloping white ones of a drawing room were made for show."

Munby was fascinated by working girls and actresses who dressed in men's clothes. He often had pictures of himself taken with the pit girls in their working dress and in the diary compares himself, his stature, his hands, and feet with theirs.[86] In several places, Munby compares his size with that of Hannah. We know that she was 5'7½" tall and weighed nearly as much as he did, 11½ stones (161 lbs). At various times he measured her biceps and the size is given variously as thirteen, fourteen and once even eighteen inches round. Hannah in her diary too, glories in her strength and size relative to "Massa." Her hands are too big to wear his gloves. "i can heave my Master easy and carry him as if he was a child, nearly."[87] She was even photographed by Munby with hair cut short and dressed in men's clothes. (She also recorded in her diary in various places that she wrestled a calling tradesman and floored a young, male fellow servant, neither of whom were amused.) The sex reversal theme, then, just as the class transformation theme figures in their fantasy games. In one of his dialect poems Munby wrote:

> Look at mah Master, then an' look at me
> Wi' his fine fingers an' his dainty ways
> He's like a lady—an Ah often thinks
> He *is* a laady, when Ah waits on him—
> An me a common mon'[88]

"Hannah as neat serving maid."

"Hannah as middle-class lady."

"Hannah as 'angel.' "

"Hannah dressed as a man."

Photographs by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

Again, women dressing as men, especially as "gentlemen" was a favorite music hall turn and a common frolic below stairs reported in servants and children's memoirs.[89]

The other major theme in these reversal games was the city/country division. Munby liked to see Hannah not only with bare arms and rough hands, but also wearing old-fashioned short frocks and peasant bonnets or picturesque white caps. He loved her "countrified" speech and kept lists of dialect words she used; he delighted in her rural simplicty juxtaposed to the sophistication of the drawing rooms where he met middle-class women. As we know, many of his contemporaries were also trying to rediscover country customs, dialect, and song in the beginnings of the "folk culture" movement popularized by people such as Cecil Sharpe. Pre-Raphaelite painters, too, took as a motif the warm red and brown skin tones of rural figures, often dressed in folk costume.

Although Hannah was a country woman by origin, the long years in London had cut her off from a genuinely rural culture. Although she could switch to her Shropshire dialect at will, she also had learned some French from Munby and German from a fellow servant. Her diaries, especially the later ones, are vividly written if not perfect in spelling and grammar. Munby himself introduced her to many classical authors and liked to discuss them with her. She enjoyed suprising him with her ability to do household accounts and add up column of figures. She copied manuscripts for him, wrote letters, and even checked references. Yet, to please him, she made a French peasant's bonnet from a picture he had shown her and continued to wear it despite ridicule from fellow servants.

Some of their games and activities had a strong mother (nurse/child) theme. Sometimes *he* sat on *her* lap: "Massa sits on me, feet and all on my knees—at first he thought i couldn't bear him, but i said 'oh i can, so ever since then i expect to nurse him after dinner." She would then usually fetch a basin of water and kneel down to wash his feet.[90] One of their favorite activities in the Shropshire cottage was to bathe each other. Hannah, of course, had fetched and heated the water and prepared everything beforehand. She would rub his back and wash him, an office which he says only a mother or wife (or nurse) could perform. After his bath, she would get into the tub using the same water and he would wash her back. Indeed at one point he specifically says of Hannah: "Let me be refreshed by a mother's love *and* by that of one so different."

Not all their games were so benign. Over the years Munby had taught Hannah to value her lowliness. He cut out of his diary those

"Hannah as a rural maiden." Photograph by A. J. Munby. By permission of the Master and Fellows, Trinity College Cambridge, England.

passages which explicitly explain what this "training" in love through degradation was, but it most certainly included kissing his feet and licking the mud off his boots. (In *My Secret Life* when the hero is still in his teens, he was inflamed with lust when the maidservant had to kneel to take off his boots, a standard part of a maidservant's duties.)

As in the ritual "sign" of lowliness previously described, with Munby and Hannah, both bodily and spatial symbolism was exaggerated. We have already noted his use of animal analogies and fascination with women in a kneeling position. Hannah would lurk in the basement of Fig Tree Court, she would revel in going into the backs of coal holes and water closets to clean them out, she would climb up the chimney to clean it (twice in the nude) and would curl up inside it, "like a dog" and covered with soot. She deliberately would allow lodgers to walk over her while she scrubbed on hands and knees. While she was kneeling to hammer down a new carpet, a lady kicked her and she was glad for she could put it in her diary to show Munby.[91]

Nine years after they had first met and their relationship was firmly established, Hannah had a dream which she recorded in her diary. She dreams she is at "Massa's." She is on the floor and he is showing her a book; a gentleman walked in and looked astonished. She asks Munby what to do. He says lie still but she creeps around the table "and lay curl'd up like a dog under the window" and "Massa talking to the gentleman and he didn't seem to notice me nor hardly to know i was a girl [note she was 30 years old] laying there and i was glad of that."[92]

In the two-room cottage in Shropshire where Hannah went to live, the parlor was kept solely for Munby. In this room his desk and writing equipment, the symbols of his work and attachment to the wider world, took pride of place. This scene is laid in one of Munby's barely disguised verses describing their relationship:

> His parlour an' mah kitchen is as near
> To one another, an' an mooch unlike
> As him an' me is . . .
>
> The kitchen's *my* home, Sir, an always was
> An always will be.[93]

Their compromise situation of master/husband and servant/wife was literally reproduced in space.

CONTRADICTIONS

It seems evident that Hannah tried, and to an extent, succeeded in accepting and believing in Munby's equation of dirt, lowliness, even degradation with love and inner worth. On the other hand, she admits that most servants, herself included before her "training," would have wanted to rise above scullery work or a maid-of-all-work position if they could. She too had internalized conceptions of respectability, order, and cleanliness. It was, after all, partly her task to create that order. After the incident where she rubbed her face in the dirt and kissed the mat on the pavement in front of Munby, she records her feelings: "i was glad i'd done it, but i felt so overcome somehow with the feeling of love and degradation—been in the street like that—so low and so dirty—yet liking the work so and especially for Massa's sake that it was some time afore i could feel calm."[94]

Her training in degradation was a lesson with contradictory repercussions. At one time she took a place as a "skivvy" in a lodging house in the Strand to be nearer Fig Tree Court. This kind of service was the lowest in status and the most onerous in heavy, dirty work required; it was often done by girls who had been brought up in the workhouse. It was winter and the frost had cracked Hannah's hands into open chilblains which had become ingrained with soot (a very common and painful complaint of both domestic servants and working-class housewives whose hands were constantly in water). One day she slipped out to visit Munby hoping to please him to be seen thus "in her dirt" but even Munby was appalled. In another place she was left to "clean down" a large house that had not only its full complement of London grime and soot aided by three coal fires in the house, but also a railroad running at the bottom of the garden. The family had gone away on holiday while the cleaning was being done (the usual practice) and Hannah invited Munby to come and visit her: "i wanted him to see what a big gloomy dirty house this i have to live in, and what a deal o' work was left for me to do all by myself, and i felt *so* dirty and miserable too, for after all too much dirt & too much work is sickening, & i was not surprised to see Massa look disgusted."[95]

As early as 1860, Munby himself began to realize the ramifications of his scheme. When he was on a visit to Hannah, then a maid-of-all-work in a dreary suburb, he noticed how five years of "scrubbing & cleaning, of sun & wind out of doors and kitchen fires within" have coarsened Hannah's looks: "And she was pleased with the change—*pleased* that she is now so much rougher and

coarser—because it pleases me, she thinks. Truly, every smear and stain of coarseness on her poor neglected face comes of love. And now, it is high time that all this discipline should cease, but I have no means of ending it! To be a smart parlour maid, or even lady's maid are distinctions far above her reach: she would smile incredulous if I proposed them. Che sera, sera."[96]

In 1864 when Hannah was working as a maid-of-all-work in a prosperous trademan's household, she was told to remove the wrist strap she wore as a badge of servitude to Munby. She refused and was sacked on the grounds that it made her too dirty to wait on table. The constant need to wash and change from work clothes to a clean apron at any minute to be summoned upstairs or answer the door was a complaint of both Hannah and many other domestic servants. The effort to maintain a clean frontstage and working backstage was an extra burden on servants when there was only one employed. After she had lost her job, Hannah wrote bitterly: "i felt a bit hurt to be told i was too dirty, when my dirt was all got with making things clean for them." This is her satisfaction, the work that her strength and skill can accomplish:

> How shamed ladies'd be to have hands and arms like mine and how weak they'd be to do my work and how shocked to touch the dirty things even what i black my whole hands with every day—yet such things must be done and the lady's'd be the first to cry out if they was to find nobody to do it for 'em—so the lowest work i think is honourable in itself and the poor drudge is honourable too providing her mind isn't coarse and low as her work, both cause its useful and for be'en content with the station she is placed in.[97]

Once Hannah even made the dangerous connection between this strength and the constraints of her deference and dependency. In a tiff with an employer, occasioned by her visits to Munby, she noted: "i told Massa how it was to feel a great big wench & strong as i am, as could crush a weak thing like Miss Margaret is with one hand (though of course i *wouldn't* & she must know that)—for her to *trifle* with me about going out when i'd got leave to—& *play* with me as if i was a child" (Hannah was 38 years old at this time). Hannah was resentful at Munby's taking the lady's part and not helping her. She claims she wasn't rude, only "spoke up plain" but "humble as i *ought* to be to them above me." It was not a pleasant evening she spent with Munby after this incident "but i could see he didn't exactly *dislike* me for showing *spirit*."[98]

Here was one of the paradoxes of their relationship. Hannah was in many ways a more independent agent than Munby as she had supported herself from the age of eight while he was financially and in many ways still emotionally and socially dependent on his parents. Yet for all her strength and independence, Hannah's position forced her into a childish dependency on Munby. Both referred to her moods and outbursts as "being naughty." When she is put in an intolerable situation by her employer, Munby gives her a double message; backing up the authority of the employer yet obviously enjoying her show of spirit especially as he knew that he had ultimate loyalty over her life through love:

> Obeying other folks' commands
> Although she was my own[99]

Munby especially delighted to subtly attack middle-class women through Hannah; his love was stronger than their legitimate authority. In "Queen Kara" he says:

> From Nature's sanctum: whose degree is sure
> And even a slave obeying finds reward
> That Woman still should mould herself to Man
> And not to Woman. Masculine regard
> Is hers by right for blessing or for ban.[100]

He believes that Hannah, like all young servants while outwardly respectful, regards "the ladies as her natural enemies" but the gentlemen as her allies. This is very like the childhood alliance of children and servants against the moral authority of the mother. Munby was incapable of realizing that while Hannah was subservient and hardworked by all middle-class employers, the women varied just as much as the men. The ex-governess for whom Hannah worked in Margate was particularly kind and uncondescending, talking to her at length, teaching her about astronomy and loaning her books.

The same psychological shallowness is evident in Munby's reaction to any illness or even fatigue on Hannah's part. On these occasions, in contrast to his attitude to his mother's perpetual illnesses, he both panics and becomes angry with her like a child depending on an all-powerful, never-exhausted mother figure if she shows any sign of weakness:

> And again my Massa, why shd you be put out cause I had the lumbago & them sweats & languid feelings—I shall not like telling you if anything's the matter if it puts you out o'sorts, as you say—I know you'll say it's love & all that, but i know how *soon* you *wince*, & are really put out if all doesn't go to your liking, & if you was a married man with a family & delicate wife & kep a lot a servants you'd often ha' things to vex I can tell you. . . .[101]

In the year before they were married, Hannah was working for an eccentric maiden lady who lived alone. She often made Hannah

get up in the middle of the night and search the house from coal cellar to dust hole in the yard for "wicked men." Munby scolded Hannah for exposing herself to yet more colds and rheumatic pains for she had been ill on and off for some months:

I told Massa how i'd got a cold from it. he was angry with me for running the risk but i said "if my missis orders me to do a thing i must *do* it" & i said "If it costs one's life we ought to do it, else what's a servant good for?" Massa said "Yes you *shd* obey your missis of course but shouldn't you obey *me* first?" So i said "Yes Massa & if you'd bin there & told me *not* to go in the coal hole i wouldn't."[102]

In addition to these psychological contradictions, there was an economic problem. With her skill, experience, and intelligence, Hannah could have earned upwards of twenty pounds a year as an upper servant. She did try a place as cook with a kitchenmaid under her at twenty-two pounds but she soon gave it up and didn't try again: "indeed it was only nonsense for me after being used to the lowest only and Massa teaching me to love rough dirty work . . . i dislike the thought of being over anybody and ordering things not only cause i'd rather do the work myself but for fear anyone should think me set up and proud . . . for freedom and true lowliness there's nothing like being a maid of all work."[103]

Hannah, by her own admission, was very glad to turn her financial affairs totally over to Munby whom she trusted implicitly. It is probable that part of this financial dependency was the product of her blocked ambition and her acceptance of her lowliness. In February 1871, on Munby's advice, she withdrew £100 of her savings (a very substantial amount by working-class standards of the period—Munby himself only started his job at £160 a year). She was given the money in sovereigns and notes but she records in her diary that she didn't even count it: "it seem'd such a lot & confused me, for though i like saving and being careful, i hate going to the bank or having anything to do with money affairs, so i feel glad to get rid of it as long as its safe, & glad that Massa doesn't mind managing it for me, for i certainly would do nothing with it myself."[104]

Nevertheless, Hannah's relationship to Munby in his persona as *gentleman* was extremely important to her. She claimed several times that she had "seen his face in the tea-cups" before she met him; in other words that she was psychologically attuned to finding someone of higher status as proof of her own self-worth. She muses in her diary at various points about whether she could have ever fallen in love with a man of her own rank and comes to the conclusion that it is doubtful. Yet, as with women of any class, without

marriage, the final mark of her dependent status was the lack of a home of her own. Unmarried female servants no matter what their age, were always considered "girls." The mythology of the middle class maintained that these women would be taken care of as Munby took care of his old nurse, Hannah Carter, by giving her a pension in her old age. (Munby himself published a collection of *Epitaphs and Obituaries of Faithful Servants* in 1891, material culled mostly from tombstones found in his wanderings.) The Royal Commission on the Poor Law enquiry at the turn of the century confirmed that, for those domestic servants who were single and had never had a home of their own, a much more common fate was for them to seek indoor relief in the workhouse when they could no longer work.[105] Hannah felt this gap in her life increasingly as her relationship with Munby drew her further away from her childhood roots in Shropshire. Some of the entries in her diary show her often desperately "homesick." The cottage she finally had in Shropshire partly made up for this and made her resigned to living apart from Munby.

Munby too was torn by the contradictions implicit in his relationship with Hannah. He resented what he felt to be her underestimation of what he had sacrificed in remaining loyal to her. Most importantly, he didn't see, as most employers of servants didn't see, the physical and mental burden of the work load a servant such as Hannah was expected to carry. Despite the vivid, detailed description of her daily work that Hannah provided in her diary, and his own observations of working women, Munby, who had never worked with anything heavier than a pen in his life, romanticized manual work. He delighted in the fact that Hannah spent her Sunday afternoons off with him doing his housework, getting his tea, washing his feet. She also took his laundry, mending, and sewing away to do in her spare time.

After they were married, Hannah not only did all the housework, shopping, and cooking for Munby; but because she was nominally the housekeeper for the whole building at Fig Tree Court, she worked for the other tenants as well. Writing of this period, Munby exults half-jokingly in his diary: "She emptied slops, she drew water, and brought up the full can and pail, she dug coals and carried up the full scuttle; which things she does daily without any help from her Brutal Husband."[106]

Although he taught working women Latin at the Working Women's College, Munby believed that the working girl should remain simple. In his poetry he sneers at the "listless pale imitations" of gentility into which such girls develop who strive to become educated. Rather, their education should consist of "Nature, Labour

and Life." While thoroughly appreciating Hannah's inborn refinement and obvious intelligence, he lists her best characteristics as "Devout purity, homely household skill, love of nature, strength, humility and artless simplicity." A careful reading of Hannah's diaries, however, conveys the impression of an extremely efficient administrator as well as hard worker with a wide knowledge of the social nuances of her several worlds and a shrewd skill at manipulating her employers within the limits of her service relationship.

Munby's "not seeing" Hannah's distress and physical exhaustion was part of the natural relationship of the servant/wife. After they were married, he did, indeed, consider that he owned all her loyalties and legally, of course, he gained control of her income and savings. After their marriage Hannah at last took off the wrist strap, collar, and chain which she had secretly worn all the years of their courtship.

He was found of quoting Ruskin's words to her: "that the best of all service is unpaid because it is done for love." In a poem written after her death in 1909 in which Munby openly acknowledged their relationship, he calls Hannah "my faithful servant wife" and he equates love and labor as one and the same thing:

> Happy in her humble calling
> Happy on her hands and knees
> Nothing checks her—nothing daunts her,
> Til her daily work is done;
>
> And she does it not for merit but to prove
> That no labour is too low to be
> The language of her love[109]

In *Ann Morgan's Love* he repeats his favorite theme that a woman's true love will be expressed through loyalty and labor:

> Of sacrifice, of self-abandonment
> Of pure devoted, unregarded toil
> For him to whom she gives herself: for *me*

In many ways, Hannah was, in fact, a creature of his fantasy. He could not face the fact that she was a real human being with wishes and needs of her own. After they were married for a short time, Munby persuaded Hannah to dress and live as a lady and openly become his wife. It worked very briefly while they were on their wedding trip in France and for the odd week or two in hired rooms in the country. But after their return to Fig Tree Court, Hannah refused to continue and Munby, with secret relief, allowed her to remain as his housekeeper. His fascination with the pretending and

transformation game made this enjoyable at first and they could now at least live in the same house.

Munby was obviously afraid of his father's wrath and the effect on his frail, unworldly mother if he revealed the truth about his marriage. And yet after his parents' death, he seemed to become even more ambivalent about the relationship. The games were beginning to lose their charm as Hannah gained more understanding of middle-class life at close quarters, and the "strange trials" and nineteen years of waiting had left their mark on both of them. Hannah clung more than ever to her servant identity as her one claim to independence, but to Munby it seemed rather that she had learned the lesson of lowliness only too well.

In middle-class Victorian terms, A. J. Munby failed to become a full social adult for he never set up and supported a household complete with wife, children, and servants. His relations with women of his own class were mostly formal, his secret despising of their weakness was compensated by extreme chivalry and courtesy in his dealings with them in person.[108] His diary reveals that he felt much more at ease in the company of his male companions. He was especially hostile to any claims made by what he considered to be feminist women. He considered that they had neither the attractions of his "rustic maidens" nor the acknowledged, fragile femininity of their own class; rather they were unsexed beings who were viciously determined to take away real men's vocations and he remained opposed to women's suffrage all his life.[109]

Clearly, Munby was no radical in the sphere of sexual politics. Once at a party in Campden Hill he made a special effort to speak at length to a young lady with whom a close friend and contemporary was deeply in love. (He and Munby were in their early forties at the time.) "A lively good natured very pretty girl of nineteen: voila tout! Yet there is something noble in that worship of beauty and girlish weakness which makes a brave high-minded man fall down before such an object in despite of his own judgement."[110]

Munby himself had twice become involved with young middle-class women and even thought of proposing marriage, but before long he withdrew. The impression from the diary is that he was never seriously emotionally drawn to any of those from his own class. In any case, marriage to a middle-class woman would have meant his obtaining a level of income and life-style which Munby could not and would not do.

It may have been, as in the case of many other middle-class men who turned to working-class girls (or men) for their emotional life, that the split image was too great for him to maintain in a tradi-

tional marriage.[111] Nevertheless, this inability also sharpened his awareness of the contradictions in his society. He was attracted to Hannah and the women like her, degraded and dirty for his sake, but also for the independent spirit of her life in refusing to be a "lady" and thus losing that independence. Munby said of service that "it may blunt the home affections" but it gave a "sturdy independence, self-reliance and shrewdness" to the character. He quotes approvingly from one of his servant informers, "I know if I don't take care of myself, nobody else'll take care of me."[112]

Despite his, to us, repellent fascinations with certain symbolic themes: the equation of dirt and degradation with female strength and love; the comparison of women to brute beasts, of both to black slaves; and the identification of all these inferior breeds as agents of a threatening but compelling Nature, Munby did recognize, if only dimly, a fundamental contradiction of Victorian society. The sheltered lives that middle-class ladies were ideally supposed to lead depended directly on the labor of working-class girls and women, who through their services created the material conditions necessary to maintain a middle-class life-style for men and women alike.[113]

He went further than expressing his concern about this contradiction in more normal activities like the moral reform of individual women or the "rescue" of symbolically important, but marginal, groups such as child prostitutes. He wanted to see working women remain independent and in charge of their own destiny through economic and social control of their own lives. The tragedy was, of course, that his championship of this cause remained at the individual level, and stopped short at the significant barrier of manual work.

CONCLUSIONS

A detailed study of such a source as the Munby collection brings alive the connection between social structure and personality. The pervasiveness of both class and gender categories, which it illustrates, stems from the effect of often unconscious, highly charged, emotional expectations laid down in childhood, which in many cases appear in the form of subliminal images. The mutual preoccupations of Munby and Hannah with boundaries and their experience of crossing these boundaries in both fantasy and reality can tell us a great deal about the way the fabric of Victorian society was created and maintained.

Hannah's experience of both sides of the class barrier, in particular, while emphasizing the monotony and sheer drudgery of domestic work, provides insights into the constraints as well as privileges of middle-class women. Hannah obviously valued the social, physical, and spatial freedom of movement open to a servant but denied to any woman who had pretensions to gentility. In her experiments with ladies' clothing and life-style she demonstrates in a very human way the constraints which such apparently trivial factors meant in daily life. On her wedding journey to France, she had changed her short servant's skirt and jacket to dress as a lady, complete with felt hat with a feather and veil, "a grey frock with frill round my neck, and white cuffs and grey kid gloves, and carrying my striped sun shade—all different to anything i had got used to, that one day in the train i got almost ill tempered at being so muffled up, and i felt i'd much liefer feel my hands free as they used to be."[114]

When set against background knowledge of the period, the omissions in the diaries can also be as revealing as what is recorded. Munby, for example, scarcely ever mentions working-class men in detail, even those he taught at the Working Men's College. If he does, they are noted without emotion, as figures in the landscape or occasionally as part of Hannah's circle: her brother, uncle, or fellow servants. He seems to have concentrated almost exclusively on women although heavily "masculinized" women. Yet it is known at this period that cross-class homosexual relations exercised both intense attraction as well as fear for many men of Munby's background and education.[115] Working-class youth, as well as girls, could represent the natural and uncorrupted domain. Edward Carpenter expressing his love for the poor and uneducated "thick-thighed, hot, coarse-fleshed young brick layer, with the strip around his waist" uses language very reminiscent of Munby's.[116] The lure of the unknown appears especially strong in the image of the dusky native boy so easily available to colonial soldiers, administrators, and adventurers.

This view at times comes close to a vision of the working class as representing "true" masculinity, the power of manual work. Such a force would revitalize the effete, over-urbanized, even feminized, middle class; but at the same time, it is equated with fear of the threatening working class mob. Munby, as well as reformers of many varieties and even radicals, tried to use personal (sexual) relationships to bring the classes closer together, to bridge the artificial gap between human beings—consider E. M. Forster's cry of "only connect." Yet cross-class relationships always displayed a certain ambivalence for they were ultimately based on power and exploitation; first and foremost the power of money, but also the education and life-style, while within heterosexual relations these powers were augmented by the rights traditionally due to the man.

A. J. Munby had a dim sense of this ambivalence for he had spent his whole life in trying to come to terms with the dilemma of class and gender while at the same time making full use of the prerogatives of his status as an upper middle-class man. He expressed his unease in a passage from his diary where he focuses, as so often, on the metaphor of *hands*.

In 1860 he was dining with some of his men friends at a country inn. One of his favorite types of "country wench" with big, red hands and bare arms waited at table and Munby mused:

> Are the relations of the sexes really inverted when three men sit at table, with hands delicate and jewelled, and a woman stands behind and waits, offering the dishes with so large coarse a hand that makes her master's look almost lady-like: And is it the proper thing, that the *women* should sit as at a ball supper, drawing the gloves from their dainty fingers, and waited on by *men* whose hands that seemed so ladylike by comparison with Molly's, look sinewy and labourious by the side of Blanche's tender tips? If *this* is right for one class is that for the other? In short, what, in the Equation of Life, is the respective value of the terms *sex* and *station*."[117]

In the course of studying this one relationship in depth it has become evident that the separation of spheres for women and men which had begun as an attempt to solve the contradictions created by the pursuit of economic power and rationality through the market, had itself created intense contradictions for the individual men who reaped its benefits. At the same time, it also becomes clear that the interconnection of these hierarchical divisions could blight innumerable lives of those who were made most vulnerable by that system, particularly young working-class women.

APPENDIX

From A. J. Munby, *Benois: Poems*, 1852

THE SEXES

O, you are fair—you have soft turtle-eyes,
  Not flush'd with vulgar passion, clouded not
With stains of folly,—whose transparent lymph
  No shadows dull, no fretful eddies blot:

Your souls are precious oratories, closed
  And curtain'd in from all things not divine;
Where smoothest sounds enrich the loving air,
  And moons alone and silver cressets shine.

You dwell in peace among your pleasant hours—
  You hear no echoes from the far-off strife;
You lift your shining eyes, and all the place
  Feels happier—feels the magic of your life.

But we—for us in the thick thronging days
  No shrine, no bower, no oasis appears;
No path is left whereby we might have climb'd
  Back for a moment to the better years:

We have forgotten all—we hear not now
  Our mothers' teachings,—see not in the land
Its ancient beauties,—look on you as dreams
  Too fair to love, too high to understand:

We are uncover'd—the rank, stagnant air
  Infects our breath—our curdled souls endure
A press of crawling horrors—and vile sounds
  Hiss in our dull ears: how can we be pure?

TWO HANDS

I

This is her hand, her cool and fragrant hand:
  Long lissome fingers, soft as the south wind;
  A roseleaf palm, which Love's own kiss would find
Sweet as the rose; and many a thin blue strand
Vein'd in the white, our homage to command.
  All grace of form and colour has combined
  To give us this fair index of a mind
Pure as her hands, and not less nobly plann'd.

Ah, tender toys, so slight, so flexible!
  Can they too share the strenuous work of life,
And help their owner to do long and well
  The duties of a woman and a wife;
Or, may they brook no labour more severe
Than just to charm the eye and soothe the ear?

II

This is her hand, her large and rugged hand:
  Strong nervous fingers, stiff with homely toil,
  Yet capable; for labour cannot spoil
Their native vigour, nor their swift command
Of household tools, indoors or on the land.
  What if rough work must harden and must soil
  Her massive palms? They are but as a foil
To that sweet face which all can understand.

Yes, all enjoy the beauty of her face;
  But few perceive the pathos and the power
Of those broad hands, or feel that inner grace
  Of which they are the symbol and the flower:
The grace of lowly help; of duty done
Unselfishly, for all—for anyone.

NOTES

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[1] Throughout this paper, I shall be using *gender* to refer to the socially constructed categories, masculinity and femininity, while *sex* refers to the biological categories, male and female. See Ann Oakley, *Sex, Gender and Society* (London: Temple Smith, 1972).

[2] Anthropologists have made use of this approach far more often than historians. E.g., "Gender is very much made use of in Hagen to talk about things other than men and women, and the fact that it is so used has a feed back effect on how the sexes are perceived. . . . The logic inherent in the way such notions are set up must be understood in relation to general values in the society." (M. Strathern, "The Achievement of Sex: Paradoxes in Hagen Gender Thinking," in *Yearbook of Symbolic Anthropology*, ed. E. Schwimmer [Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978], p. 171.)

[3] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1973).

[4] Edward Shils, "Charisma, Order and Status," in *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p. 269.

[5] C. Delphy, "Proto-Feminism and anti-feminism," in *The Main Enemy: A Materialist Analysis of Women's Oppression* (London: Women's Research and Resources Centre, 1977).

[6] Geoffrey Pearson, *The Deviant Imagination: Psychiatry, Social Work and Social Change* (London: MacMillan, 1975), p. 162; Michael Steig, "Dicken's Excremental Vision," *Victorian Studies* 13 (March 1970): 339-54; Gertrude Himmelfarb, "Mayhew's Poor: A Problem of Identity," *Victorian Studies* 14 (March 1971): 307-20. See also H. Hallam, "Report of the Council of the Statistical Society of London from a Committee of its Fellows appointed to make an investigation into the state of the poorer classes," *Journal of the Statistical Society of London*, August 1848, p. 193: ". . . since the population (St. George's in the East) is, to some extent the drainage from the grades next above them we should rather hope to find a cure by cutting off the supply of degradation than by attempting to reform and elevate it in the lowest depths to which it can sink."

[7] Jeffrey Weeks, *Coming Out: Homosexual Politics in Britain from the Nineteenth Century to the Present* (London: Quartet Books, 1977); Judith Walkowitz, "The Making of an Outcast Group: Prostitutes and Working Women," in *The Widening Sphere*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1977).

[8] John Berger, "Animals as Metaphor," *New Society*, 10 March 1977, pp. 504-5. The idea that women are both part of but outside "society" is a point of view still expressed in discussions of sexual divisions. It has recently been the center of a debate: nature/culture = female/male. See Edwin Ardener, "Belief and the Problem of Women," in *Perceiving Women*, ed. Shirley Ardener (London: Dent, 1977); and a critique, Nicole-Claude Mathieu, "Man-Culture and Woman-Nature," *Women's Studies International Quarterly* 1 (Spring 1978): 55-65.

[9] Examination of physical features such as skull capacity and other "evidence amassed from the very beginning tended to relegate the female, with the Negro, to a subordinate position," John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p. 48.

[10] Yet we as observers should know that the way sexuality and particularly rituals surrounding sex are used can tell us something not so much about sex per se as about the society. Mary Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology* (London: Routledge, 1975).

[11] Max Weber, "Religious Ethics and the World: Sexuality and Art," *Economy and Society*, trans. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1968), 3: 603.

[12] G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Horrors of the Half-Known Life: Male Attitudes toward Woman and Sexuality in 19th Century America* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976); and Peter Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System," *International Review of Social History* 3 (1963).

[13] Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Sex as Symbol in Victorian Purity: An Ethnohistorical Analysis of Jacksonian America," in *Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family*, eds. John Demos and Sarane S. Boocock, *American Journal of Sociology* 84, supplement (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

[14] Eric Trudgill, *Madonnas and Magdalanes: The Origins and Development of Victorian Sexual Attitudes* (London: Heinmann, 1976).

[15] Sarah Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1976).

[16] Rosemary Ruether, "Misogynism and Virginal Feminism in the Fathers of the Church," in *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Tradition*, ed. R. Ruether (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1974).

[17] Cleo McNelly, "Nature, Women and Claude Lévi-Strauss: A Reading of Tristes Tropiques as Myth," *Massachusetts Review* 16 (Winter 1975): 10-11.

[18] Ibid., p. 11.

[19] Anthony Wohl, "Sex and the Single Room: Incest among the Victorian Working Class," in *The Victorian Family: Structures and Stresses*, ed. A. Wohl (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

[20] Deborah Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Re-examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* (Spring 1978); Eric Trudgill, *Madonnas and Magdalanes*.

[21] Stephen Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-19th Century England* (New York: Bantam Books, 1971).

[22] Charles Ansell, *On the Rate of Mortality at Early Periods of Life, the Age of Marriage & Other Statistics of Families in the Upper and Professional Classes* (London: C. and E. Layton, 1874).

[23] C. Carey, *Wee Wifie* (London and New York: F. M. Lupton, 1869).

[24] Betty Askwith, *Two Victorian Families* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1971).

[25] Theresa McBride, " 'As the Twig is Bent': The Victorian Nanny," in *The Victorian Family: Structures and Stresses*, ed. Anthony Wohl (London: Croom Helm, 1978); James Bossard, "Domestic Servants and Child Development," *The Sociology of Child Development* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954).

[26] Leonore Davidoff, "The Rationalization of Housework," in *Exploitation in Work and Marriage*, eds. Diana Barker and Sheila Allen (London: Longman's, 1976).

[27] Leonore Davidoff, 'Mastered for Life: Servant and Wife in Victorian Edwardian England," *Journal of Social History* 7 (Summer 1974): 406-28.

[28] J. Gathorne Hardy, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Nanny* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1972).

[29] McBride, " 'As the Twig is Bent' "; and Leonore Davidoff, "Forbidden Territories: Children, Servants and the Victorian House," unpublished lecture delivered to the Victorian Society, Spring 1978.

[30] J. Swann, "*Mater* and Nannie: Freud's Two Mothers and the Discovery of the Oedipus Complex," *American Imago: A Psychoanalytic Journal for Culture, Science and the Arts* (Spring 1974); and Kenneth A. Grigg, "All Roads Lead to Rome: The Role of the Nursemaid in Freud's Dreams," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association* 21 (1973): 108-126.

[31] Eugene Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), pp. 354, 361.

[32] Calvin C. Hernton, *Sex and Racism* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973).

In his section on "The Sexual Gain," John Dollard discussed the illicit but acknowledged sexual exploitation of black women by white men in the American South. In a period when black and white cultures varied it is possible that diet etc. produced body odours which differed but it is also possible that the difference was perceived as greater than it really was. In any case it has obvious similarity to the case I am discussing. "It may be that just those odours which are revolting when one is in a conventional mood may be exciting in the sexual mood." See John Dollard, "The Sexual Gain," in *Caste and Class in A Southern Town* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1949), p. 144.

The complexity and importance of this taboo subject is brought out by Clara Thompson's point that female sexuality was directly associated with uncleanness and especially odour. Any evidence of bodily secretion or odour betrayed them and thus sex itself becomes evidence of lower-class origins which may be related to the question of menstruation. See Clara Thompson, "Some Effects of the Derogatory Attitude towards Female Sexuality," in *Psychoanalysis and Women*, ed. Jean Baker Miller (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1974).

[33] Mary Lutyens, *To Be Young: Some Chapters of Autobiography* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1959), p. 15.

[34] Robert Louis Stevenson, *Collected Poems*, ed. Janet Adam Smith (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1951), p. 361.

[35] Ursula Bloom, *"Mrs. Bunthrope's Respects": A Chronicle of Cooks* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 42.

[36] Susan Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk: A Life of Charles Kingsley* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1974).

[37] Geoffrey Grigson, *The Crest on the Silver: An Autobiography* (London: The Cresset Press, 1950), p. 51.

[38] Arthur J. Munby, "Dichter und Baverin," *Relicta* (London: Bertram Dobell, 1909); Leonore Davidoff, *The Best Circles: Society Etiquette and the Season* (London: Croom Helm, 1973).

[39] Alrik Gustavson, *Six Scandinavian Novelists* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1966), p. 292.

[40] Legal protection for servants from being physically punished was only provided as part of the Offenses Against the Person Act of 1861 and complaints had to be made to two J.Ps. J. D. Caswell, *The Law of Domestic Service* (London: Grant Richards Ltd., 1913).

[41] Ronald Blythe, *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (London: Delta Books, 1971).

[42] M. Motherly, *The Servant's Behaviour Book: Hints on Manners and Dress for Maid Servants* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1859), p. 49.

"Humility is expressed in all postures which involve bowing, crouching or lowering the body." (M. Argyle, *Bodily Communication* [London: Metheun & Co., 1976], p. 284).

[43] Stephen Tallents, *Man and Boy* (London: Faber & Faber, 1943), p. 10; Sigrid Undset, *The Longest Years*, trans. A. G. Charter (London: Cassell & Co., 1935).

[44] Jennifer Wayne, *Brown Bread and Butter in the Basement: a "twenties childhood"* (London: Gollancz, 1975), p. 43.

[45] Cominos, "Late Victorian Sexual Respectability and the Social System."

[46] Sigmund Freud, "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love," *On Sexuality* (Harmondsworth: Pelican Freud Library, 1977), pp. 251-54.

[47] Arthur J. Munby, *Munby Diary*, September 1860.

[48] Munby's story has been told and excerpts from his diary sensitively edited in Derek Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds: The Life and Diaries of A. J. Munby*

1828-1910 (London: Abacus, 1974); and Arthur J. Munby, *Diaries 1859-1898.* I am very indebted to Hudson's work and interpretation. All quotations from the diaries are by permission of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. I have retained spelling, punctuation and underlining exactly as they appear in all excerpts. I have also followed the general convention of referring to Arthur Munby by his last name only while Hannah Cullwick is invariably called simply Hannah. Nevertheless, the status and power implications of this naming convention should not be overlooked. The adult middle-class man is given the impersonal dignity of his surname while the female servant retains the personalized, childlike use of her first name only.

See also: Arthur J. Munby, *Benois: Poems* (London: John Oliver, 1852); Arthur J. Munby, *Verses: New and Old* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1865); Arthur J. Munby, *Dorothy: A Country Story* (London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1880); Arthur J. Munby, *Vulgar Verses (by "Jones Brown")* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891); Arthur J. Munby, *Susan, A Poem of Degrees* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1893); Arthur J. Munby, *Ann Morgan's Love: A Pedestrian Poem* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1896); Arthur J. Munby, *Poems, Chiefly Lyric and Elegiac* (London: Kegan Paul & Co., 1901); and Arthur J. Munby, *Relicta* (London: Bertram Dobell, 1909).

[49] Douglas, *Implicit Meanings: Essays in Anthropology*, p. 61.

[50] Richard L. Schoenwald, "Training Urban Man: A hypothesis about the sanitary movement," in *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, eds. Michael Wolff and H. J. Dyos (London: Routledge, 1974), 2: 669-92.

[51] Robert A. Fothergill, *Private Chronicles: A Study of English Diaries* (London: Oxford, 1974).

[52] Anon., *My Secret Life* (New York: Grove Press, 1966).

[53] Letter from Munby, quoted in D. Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, p. 39.

[54] A. John, *By the Sweat of Their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines* (London: Croom Helm, 1980).

[55] Leonore Davidoff, Jean L'Esperance, and H. Newby, "Landscape with Figures: Home and Community in English Society," in *The Rights and Wrongs of Women*, eds. Anne Oakley and Juliet Mitchell (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976); and John Henry Raleigh, "The Novel and the City," *Victorian Studies* 11 (March 1968): 291-329.

[56] Actors and especially circus performers and travelling players, like gypsies, held a special place in the pantheon of Victorian fantasy. Their independence from the duties and constraints of work, the element of play in their lives, held a special attraction as well as moral opprobium. See, for example, the place of the circus people in Charles Dickens's *Hard Times.*

[57] Munby, Diary, June 1859, quoted in Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, p. 35.

[58] Munby, Diary, 1860.

[59] A. J. Munby, Hannah's Volume 2, 1877.

[60] Munby, Diary, 1860.

[61] A. J. Munby, Hannah's Place, 1841-1872.

[62] This point has been made by Pam Taylor, Centre for Cultural Studies, Birmingham, in her study of domestic service in the inter-war period.

[63] Interestingly, it was the governess who comforted her in her sorrow. Governesses, especially retired or "broken down," were often noted by Hannah throughout her diaries. The two maiden ladies who she worked for in Margate and who were very kind to her were ex-governesses who were trying to run a boarding house. Hannah was always slightly pitying of such women, not real ladies, yet trying to live a genteel life without the resources to do so and unable to do a thing for themselves, not even sew their own clothes. Hannah's diary confirms the social and metaphorical, not to be confused with statistical, importance of the governess in the Victorian view of gender and class. See also, Leonore Davidoff, "The English Victorian Governess: A Study in Social Isolation," unpublished manuscript, 1971; M. Jeanne Peterson, "The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society," in *Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age*, ed. Martha Vicinus (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1973).

[64] A. J. Munby, Hannah's Volumes, 1875.

[65] A. J. Munby, Hannah's Places, 1841-1872.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Cissie Fairchild makes the point that it was the physical, social and economic vulnerability of lower class women which made them susceptible to seduction by their masters (masters' sons, relatives, or friends) or to promises of marriage from their swains. See Cissie Fairchild, "Female Sexual Attitudes and the Rise of Illegitimacy: A Case Study," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8 (Spring 1978): 627-67.

[68] Hannah Munby's Diary of Her Life As A Servant in the Temple, September 1873.

[69] Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds.* Personal communication, Pat Bradford, archivist, Trinity College, Cambridge, who catalogued the Munby collection.

[70] Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor, *Escape Attempts* (London: Allen Lane, 1976), p. 92. For the recent discovery of another case of double play acting which expresses themes of mastery and submission in a sexual context, see the case of Charles and Mary Kingsley, Susan Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk.*

[71] At the level of the individual psyche, hands were also regarded as the agents of the "dirty" work involved in masturbation, an obsessive concern of the middle class at this time. See Trudgill, *Madonnas and Magdalanes.*

"It is just as plausible to examine sexual behaviour for its capacity to express and serve non-sexual motives as the reverse": John H. Gagnon and William Simon, *Sexual Conduct: The Social Sources of Human Sexuality* (Chicago: Aldine, 1973), p. 17. Feet and hands as fetishes often screen actual relations from oneself and others. See Gertrud Lenzer, "On Masochism: A Contribution to the History of Phantasy and Its Theory," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture, and Society* 1 (Winter 1975).

[72] G. A. Sala, *Margaret Foster: A dream within a dream* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1897), p. 15.

[73] A. J. Munby, *Vulgar Verses* (by "Jones Brown") (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891).

[74] Mary Merryweather, *Experience of Factory Life: Being a Record of Fourteen Years Employed at Mr. Courtauld's Factory in Halstead* (London: B. R. Parkes, 1862), p. 9.

A late Victorian health visitor noted that this perception by the rich that the poor have large hands and feet resulted in the giving of cast off clothing, particularly boots, which never fitted properly: See M. E. Loane, *The Next Street But One* (London: Edward Arnold, 1907). In fact, given differential feeding, standards of living and the effects of grinding physical work, we know that the poor would have been of smaller physique than the middle class or even regularly employed working class.

[75] See the following 17th century description of the perfect wife: "when shee submits herselfe with quietness, cheerefully, even as a well-broken horse turns at the least check of the riders bride, readily going and standing as he wishes that sits upon his back," in William Whatley, *A Bride-Bush or a Wedding Sermon*, quoted in Kathleen Davies " 'The Sacred Condition of Equality'—how original were Puritan doctrines of marriage?" *Social History* 5 (May 1977): 572. Davies goes on to say that "the metaphor of horse breaking was a favorite one."

[76] A. J. Munby, Diary, 1863.

[77] A. J. Munby, "Leonard and Elisabeth: A Subterranean Story," unpublished poem, 1896, kindness of the late Dr. A. N. L. Munby and Dr. A. John.

[78] Davidoff, "The Rationalization of Housework."

[79] Arrah B. Evarts, "Color Symbolism," *The Psychoanalytic Review* 6 (April 1919): 124-57.

[80] James Walvin, *Black and White: The Negro in English Society 1555-1945* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1973). According to the O.E.D. definition from that per-

iod black implied "deeply stained with dirt, soiled, dirty, foul . . . having dark or deadly purposes, malignant, pertaining to or involving death, baneful, disasterous, sinister—an emotionally partisan colour, the hand maid and symbol of baseness and evil."

[81] Winthrop Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968).

[82] Chitty, *The Beast and the Monk*.

[83] Hannah's Diary, February 1872. Munby and Hannah have constructed these "signs of lowness" on the base of "socially valid and institutionally recommended standards of 'preference' " given by the position of Victorian domestic service. See H. Garfinkel, "Conditions of Successful Degradation Ceremonies," in *Deviance: The Interactionist Perspective*, eds. Earl Rubington and Martin Weinberg (London: Collier-MacMillan, 1973), p. 89.

[84] Hannah's Diary, April 1870.

[85] A. J. Munby, Diary, May 1873, quoted in Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*.

[86] This is a kind of selective perception which still influences our behaviour. "If pairing were random, the woman would actually be taller than the man in 1 out of 6 couples." Judith Stiehm, "Invidious Intimacy," *Social Policy* 6 (March/April 1976): 12.

[87] A. J. Munby, Diary, 1859.

[88] A. J. Munby, *Ann Morgan's Love: A Pedestrian Poem* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1896).

[89] Edith Oliver, *Without Knowing Mr. Walkley: Personal Memories* (London: Faber and Faber, 1939).

[90] Hannah's Diary, February 1870. To "nurse" implies cuddling a baby or child on one's lap rather than the American usage which specifically means breastfeeding.

[91] Hannah's Diary, July 1864.

[92] Hannah's Diary, February 1863.

[93] A. J. Munby, *Ann Morgan's Love*.

[94] Hannah's Diary, April 1870.

[95] Hannah's Diary, July 1871.

[96] A. J. Munby, Diary, February 1860, quoted in Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, p. 52.

[97] Hannah Cullwick, A Maid of All Work's Diary, 1864.

[98] Hannah's Diary, May 1871.

[99] A. J. Munby, "Dichter Und Baverin," *Relicta* (London: Bertram Dobell, 1909).

[100] A. J. Munby, *Vulgar Verses*, (by "Jones Brown").

[101] Letter from Hannah to Munby, December 5, 1886, quoted in Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*, p. 411.

[102] Hannah's Diary, April 1872.

[103] A. J. Munby, Hannah Cullwick's Account of Her Own Life, 1873.

[104] Hannah's Diary, February 1871.

[105] *Royal Commission on the Poor Law*, (Statistical Appendix, 1910, Vol. 53).

[106] A. J. Munby, Hannah's Volumes 1875. With the co-operation of the Castle Museum at York, I have been able to estimate that a standard coal scuttle, when full, weighed between 28 and 30 pounds. A large bath jug when filled with water also averaged about 30 pounds.

[107] A. J. Munby, *Relicta*, 1909.

[108] Hudson, *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*.

[109] The contradiction between the beliefs and practices of upper-middle-class men who accepted the idea of middle-class women as pure gentle creatures in need of protection from the rough and tumble of the public world have been discussed in A. Sachs and J. H. Wilson, *Sexism and the Law: A Study of Male Beliefs and Legal Bias in Britain and the United States* (London: Martin Robertson, 1978). See also Brian Harrison, *Separate Spheres: the opposition to women's suffrage in Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1978).

[110] A. J. Munby, Diary, 1863.

[111] "The man almost always feels his respect for the woman acting as a restriction on his sexual activity, and only develops full potency when he is with a debased sexual object, and this in its turn is partly caused by the entrance of perverse components in his sexual aims, which he does not venture to satisfy with a woman he respects": Sigmund Freud, "On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love," *On Sexuality*, p. 254.

[112] A. J. Munby, Diary, 1860.

[113] Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon,' " p. 378.

[114] Hannah Munby's Diary of Her Life as a Servant in the Temple, August 1873.

[115] Weeks, *Coming Out*; and Jeffrey Weeks, "Inverts, Perverts and Mary Annes: Aspects of Male Prostitution in the 19th and early 20th Centuries," *Journal of Homosexuality*, Vol. 6, Nos. 1 and 2, Fall/Winter 1980-1.

[116] Weeks, *Coming Out*, p. 41.

[117] A. J. Munby, Diary, 1860.

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THE CATEGORY OF SEX

1976 / 1982

O. expresses a virile idea. Virile or at least masculine. At last a woman who admits it! Who admits what? Something that women have always till now refused to admit (and today more than ever before). Something that men have always reproached them with: that they never cease obeying their nature, the call of their blood, that everything in them, even their minds, is sex.
— Jean Paulhan, "Happiness in Slavery,"
preface to *The Story of O*, by Pauline de Réage

In the course of the year 1838, the peaceful island of Barbados was rocked by a strange and bloody revolt. About two hundred Negroes of both sexes, all of whom had recently been emancipated by the Proclamation of March, came one morning to beg their former master, a certain Glenelg, to take them back into bondage. . . . I suspect . . . that Glenelg's slaves were in love with their master, that they couldn't bear to be without him.
— Jean Paulhan, "Happiness in Slavery"

What should I be getting married for? I find life good enough as it is. What do I need a wife for? . . . And what's so good about a woman? — A woman is a worker. A woman is a man's servant. — But what would I be needing a worker for? — That's just it. You like to have others pulling your chestnuts out of the fire. . . . — Well, marry me off, if that's the case.
— Ivan Turgenev, *The Hunting Sketches*

The perenniality of the sexes and the perenniality of slaves and masters proceed from the same belief, and, as there are no slaves without masters, there are no women without men. The ideology of sexual difference functions as censorship in our culture by masking, on the ground of nature, the social opposition between men and women. Masculine/feminine, male/female are the categories which serve to conceal the fact that social differences always belong to an economic, political, ideological order. Every system of domination establishes divisions at the material and economic level. Furthermore, the divisions are abstracted and turned into concepts by the masters, and later on by the slaves when they rebel and start to struggle. The masters explain and justify the established divisions as a result of natural differences. The slaves, when they rebel and start to struggle, read social oppositions into the so-called natural differences.

For there is no sex. There is but sex that is oppressed and sex that oppresses. It is oppression that creates sex and not the contrary. The contrary would be to say that sex creates oppression, or to say that the cause (origin) of oppression is to be found in sex itself, in a natural division of the sexes preexisting (or outside of) society.

The primacy of difference so constitutes our thought that it prevents turning inward on itself to question itself, no matter how necessary that may be to apprehend the basis of that which precisely constitutes it. To apprehend a difference in dialectical terms is to make apparent the contradictory terms to be resolved. To understand social reality in dialectical materialist terms is to apprehend the oppositions between classes, term to term, and make them meet under the same copula (a conflict in the social order), which is also a resolution (an abolition in the social order) of the apparent contradictions.

The class struggle is precisely that which resolves the contradictions between two opposed classes by abolishing them at the same time that it constitutes and reveals them as classes. The class struggle between women and men, which should be undertaken by all women, is that which resolves the contradictions between the sexes, abolishing them at the same time that it makes them understood. We must notice that the contradictions always belong to a material order. The important idea for me is that before the conflict (rebellion, struggle) there are no categories of opposition but only of difference. And it is not until the struggle breaks out that the violent reality of the oppositions and the political nature of the differences become manifest. For as long as oppositions (differences) appear as given, already there, before all thought, "natural" — as long as there is no conflict and no struggle — there is no dialectic, there is no change, no movement. The dominant thought refuses to turn inward on itself to apprehend that which questions it.

And, indeed, as long as there is no women's struggle, there is no conflict between men and women. It is the fate of women to perform three-quarters of the work of society (in the public as well as in the private domain) plus the bodily work of reproduction according to a preestablished rate. Being murdered, mutilated, physically and mentally tortured and abused, being raped, being battered, and being forced to marry is the fate of women. And fate supposedly cannot be changed. Women do not know that they are totally dominated by men, and when they acknowledge the fact, they can "hardly believe it." And often, as a last recourse before the bare and crude reality, they refuse to "believe" that men dominate them with full knowledge (for oppression is far more hideous for the oppressed than for the oppressors). Men, on the other hand, know perfectly well that

they are dominating women ("We are the masters of women," said André Breton[1]) and are trained to do it. They do not need to express it all the time, for one can scarcely talk of domination over what one owns.

What is this thought which refuses to reverse itself, which never puts into question what primarily constitutes it? This thought is the dominant thought. It is a thought which affirms an "already there" of the sexes, something which is supposed to have come before all thought, before all society. This thought is the thought of those who rule over women.

> The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas: hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance. (Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*)

This thought based on the primacy of difference is the thought of domination.

Dominance provides women with a body of data, of givens, of a prioris, which, all the more for being questionable, form a huge political construct, a tight network that affects everything, our thoughts, our gestures, our acts, our work, our feelings, our relationships.

Dominance thus teaches us from all directions:

—that there are before all thinking, all society, "sexes" (two categories of individuals born) with a constitutive difference, a difference that has ontological consequences (the metaphysical approach),

—that there are before all thinking, all social order, "sexes" with a "natural" or "biological" or "hormonal" or "genetic" difference that has sociological consequences (the scientific approach),

—that there is before all thinking, all social order, a "natural division of labor in the family," a "division of labor [that] was originally nothing *but* the division of labor in the sexual act" (the Marxist approach).

Whatever the approach, the idea remains basically the same. The sexes, in spite of their constitutive difference, must inevitably develop relationships from category to category. Belonging to the natural order, these relationships cannot be spoken of as social relationships. This thought which impregnates all discourses, including common-sense ones (Adam's rib or Adam *is*, Eve is Adam's rib), is the thought of domination. Its body of discourses is constantly reinforced on all levels of social reality and conceals the political fact of the subjugation of one sex by the other, the compulsory character of the category itself (which constitutes the first definition of the social being in civil status). The category of sex does not exist a priori, before all society. And as a category of dominance it cannot be a product of natural dominance but of the social dominance of women by men, for there is but social dominance.

The category of sex is the political category that founds society as heterosexual. As such it does not concern being but relationships (for women and men are the result of relationships), although the two aspects are always confused when they are discussed. The category of sex is the one that rules as "natural" the

relation that is at the base of (heterosexual) society and through which half of the population, women, are "heterosexualized" (the making of women is like the making of eunuchs, the breeding of slaves, of animals) and submitted to a heterosexual economy. For the category of sex is the product of a heterosexual society which imposes on women the rigid obligation of the reproduction of the "species," that is, the reproduction of heterosexual society. The compulsory reproduction of the "species" by women is the system of exploitation on which heterosexuality is economically based. Reproduction is essentially that work, that production by women, through which the appropriation by men of all the work of women proceeds. One must include here the appropriation of work which is associated "by nature" with reproduction, the raising of children and domestic chores. This appropriation of the work of women is effected in the same way as the appropriation of the work of the working class by the ruling class. It cannot be said that one of these two productions (reproduction) is "natural" while the other one is social. This argument is only the theoretical, ideological justification of oppression, an argument to make women believe that before society and in all societies they are subject to this obligation to reproduce. However, as we know nothing about work, about social production, outside of the context of exploitation, we know nothing about the reproduction of society outside of its context of exploitation.

The category of sex is the product of a heterosexual society in which men appropriate for themselves the reproduction and production of women and also their physical persons by means of a contract called the marriage contract. Compare this contract with the contract that binds a worker to his employer. The contract binding the woman to the man is in principle a contract for life, which only law can break (divorce). It assigns the woman certain obligations, including unpaid work. The work (housework, raising children) and the obligations (surrender of her reproduction in the name of her husband, cohabitation by day and night, forced coitus, assignment of residence implied by the legal concept of "surrender of the conjugal domicile") mean in their terms a surrender by the woman of her physical person to her husband. That the woman depends directly on her husband is implicit in the police's policy of not intervening when a husband beats his wife. The police intervene with the specific charge of assault and battery when one citizen beats another citizen. But a woman who has signed a marriage contract has thereby ceased to be an ordinary citizen (protected by law). The police openly express their aversion to getting involved in domestic affairs (as opposed to civil affairs), where the authority of the state does not have to intervene directly since it is relayed through that of the husband. One has to go to shelters for battered women to see how far this authority can be exercised.

The category of sex is the product of heterosexual society that turns half of the population into sexual beings, for sex is a category which women cannot be outside of. Wherever they are, whatever they do (including working in the public sector), they are seen (and made) sexually available to men, and they, breasts, buttocks, costume, must be visible. They must wear their yellow star, their constant smile, day and night. One might consider that every woman, married or not, has a period of forced sexual service, a sexual service which we may compare to the military one, and which can vary between a day, a year, or twenty-five years or more. Some lesbians and nuns escape, but they are very few,

although the number is growing. Although women are very visible as sexual beings, as social beings they are totally invisible, and as such must appear as little as possible, and always with some kind of excuse if they do so. One only has to read interviews with outstanding women to hear them apologizing. And the newspapers still today report that "two students and a woman," "two lawyers and a woman," "three travelers and a woman" were seen doing this or that. For the category of sex is the category that sticks to women, for only they cannot be conceived of outside of it. Only *they* are sex, *the* sex, and sex they have been made in their minds, bodies, acts, gestures; even their murders and beatings are sexual. Indeed, the category of sex tightly holds women.

For the category of sex is a totalitarian one, which to prove true has its inquisitions, its courts, its tribunals, its body of laws, its terrors, its tortures, its mutilations, its executions, its police. It shapes the mind as well as the body since it controls all mental production. It grips our minds in such a way that we cannot think outside of it. This is why we must destroy it and start thinking beyond it if we want to start thinking at all, as we must destroy the sexes as a sociological reality if we want to start to exist. The category of sex is the category that ordains slavery for women, and it works specifically, as it did for black slaves, through an operation of reduction, by taking the part for the whole, a part (color, sex) through which the whole human group has to pass as through a screen. Notice that in civil matters color as well as sex still must be "declared." However, because of the abolition of slavery, the "declaration" of "color" is now considered discriminatory. But that does not hold true for the "declaration" of "sex," which not even women dream of abolishing. I say: it is about time to do so.[2]

ONE IS NOT BORN A WOMAN

1981

A materialist feminist[1] approach to women's oppression destroys the idea that women are a "natural group": "a racial group of a special kind, a group perceived *as natural,* a group of men considered as materially specific in their bodies."[2] What the analysis accomplishes on the level of ideas, practice makes actual at the level of facts: by its very existence, lesbian society destroys the artificial (social) fact constituting women as a "natural group." A lesbian society[3] pragmatically reveals that the division from men of which women have been the object is a political one and shows that we have been ideologically rebuilt into a "natural group." In the case of women, ideology goes far since our bodies as well as our minds are the product of this manipulation. We have been compelled in our bodies and in our minds to correspond, feature by feature, with the *idea* of nature that has been established for us. Distorted to such an extent that our deformed body is what they call "natural," what is supposed to exist as such before oppression. Distorted to such an extent that in the end oppression seems to be a consequence of this "nature" within ourselves (a nature which is only an *idea*). What a materialist analysis does by reasoning, a lesbian society accomplishes practically: not only is there no natural group "women"

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(we lesbians are living proof of it), but as individuals as well we question "woman," which for us, as for Simone de Beauvoir, is only a myth. She said: "One is not born, but becomes a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society: it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch, which is described as feminine."[4]

However, most of the feminists and lesbian-feminists in America and elsewhere still believe that the basis of women's oppression *is biological as well as* historical. Some of them even claim to find their sources in Simone de Beauvoir.[5] The belief in mother right and in a "prehistory" when women created civilization (because of a biological predisposition) while the coarse and brutal men hunted (because of a biological predisposition) is symmetrical with the biologizing interpretation of history produced up to now by the class of men. It is still the same method of finding in women and men a biological explanation of their division, outside of social facts. For me this could never constitute a lesbian approach to women's oppression, since it assumes that the basis of society or the beginning of society lies in heterosexuality. Matriarchy is no less heterosexual than patriarchy: it is only the sex of the oppressor that changes. Furthermore, not only is this conception still imprisoned in the categories of sex (woman and man), but it holds onto the idea that the capacity to give birth (biology) is what defines a woman. Although practical facts and ways of living contradict this theory in lesbian society, there are lesbians who affirm that "women and men are different species or races (the words are used interchangeably): men are biologically inferior to women; male violence is a biological inevitability . . ."[6] By doing this, by admitting that there is a "natural" division between women and men, we naturalize history, we assume that "men" and "women" have always existed and will always exist. Not only do we naturalize history, but also consequently we naturalize the social phenomena which express our oppression, making change impossible. For example, instead of seeing giving birth as a forced production, we see it as a "natural," "biological" process, forgetting that in our societies births are planned (demography), forgetting that we ourselves are programmed to produce children, while this is the only social activity "short of war"[7] that presents such a great danger of death. Thus, as long as we will be "unable to abandon by will or impulse a lifelong and centuries-old commitment to childbearing as *the* female creative act,"[8] gaining control of the production of children will mean much more than the mere control of the material means of this production: women will have to abstract themselves from the definition "woman" which is imposed upon them.

A materialist feminist approach shows that what we take for the cause or origin of oppression is in fact only the *mark*[9] imposed by the oppressor: the "myth of woman,"[10] plus its material effects and manifestations in the appropriated consciousness and bodies of women. Thus, this mark does not predate oppression: Colette Guillaumin has shown that before the socioeconomic reality of black slavery, the concept of race did not exist, at least not in its modern meaning, since it was applied to the lineage of families. However, now, race, exactly like sex, is taken as an "immediate given," a "sensible given," "physical features," belonging to a natural order. But what we believe to be a physical and direct perception is only a sophisticated and mythic con-

struction, an "imaginary formation,"[11] which reinterprets physical features (in themselves as neutral as any others but marked by the social system) through the network of relationships in which they are perceived. (They are seen as *black*, therefore they *are* black; they are seen as *women*, therefore, they *are* women. But before being *seen* that way, they first had to be *made* that way.) Lesbians should always remember and acknowledge how "unnatural," compelling, totally oppressive, and destructive being "woman" was for us in the old days before the women's liberation movement. It was a political constraint, and those who resisted it were accused of not being "real" women. But then we were proud of it, since in the accusation there was already something like a shadow of victory: the avowal by the oppressor that "woman" is not something that goes without saying, since to be one, one has to be a "real" one. We were at the same time accused of wanting to be men. Today this double accusation has been taken up again with enthusiasm in the context of the women's liberation movement by some feminists and also, alas, by some lesbians whose political goal seems somehow to be becoming more and more "feminine." To refuse to be a woman, however, does not mean that one has to become a man. Besides, if we take as an example the perfect "butch," the classic example which provokes the most horror, whom Proust would have called a woman/man, how is her alienation different from that of someone who wants to become a woman? Tweedledum and Tweedledee. At least for a woman, wanting to become a man proves that she has escaped her initial programming. But even if she would like to, with all her strength, she cannot become a man. For becoming a man would demand from a woman not only a man's external appearance but his consciousness as

well, that is, the consciousness of one who disposes by right of at least two "natural" slaves during his life span. This is impossible, and one feature of lesbian oppression consists precisely of making women out of reach for us, since women belong to men. Thus a lesbian *has to* be something else, a not-woman, a not-man, a product of society, not a product of nature, for there is no nature in society.

The refusal to become (or to remain) heterosexual always meant to refuse to become a man or a woman, consciously or not. For a lesbian this goes further than the refusal of the *role* "woman." It is the refusal of the economic, ideological, and political power of a man. This, we lesbians, and nonlesbians as well, knew before the beginning of the lesbian and feminist movement. However, as Andrea Dworkin emphasizes, many lesbians recently "have increasingly tried to transform the very ideology that has enslaved us into a dynamic, religious, psychologically compelling celebration of female biological potential."[12] Thus, some avenues of the feminist and lesbian movement lead us back to the myth of woman which was created by men especially for us, and with it we sink back into a natural group. Having stood up to fight for a sexless society,[13] we now find ourselves entrapped in the familiar deadlock of "woman is wonderful." Simone de Beauvoir underlined particularly the false consciousness which consists of selecting among the features of the myth (that women are different from men) those which look good and using them as a definition for women. What the concept "woman is wonderful" accomplishes is that it retains for defining women the best features (best according to whom?) which oppression has granted us, and it does not radically question the categories "man" and

"woman," which are political categories and not natural givens. It puts us in a position of fighting within the class "women" not as the other classes do, for the disappearance of our class, but for the defense of "woman" and its reenforcement. It leads us to develop with complacency "new" theories about our specificity: thus, we call our passivity "nonviolence," when the main and emergent point for us is to fight our passivity (our fear, rather, a justified one). The ambiguity of the term "feminist" sums up the whole situation. What does "feminist" mean? Feminist is formed with the word "femme," "woman," and means: someone who fights for women. For many of us it means someone who fights for women as a class and for the disappearance of this class. For many others it means someone who fights for woman and her defense — for the myth, then, and its reenforcement. But why was the word "feminist" chosen if it retains the least ambiguity? We chose to call ourselves "feminists" ten years ago, not in order to support or reenforce the myth of woman, nor to identify ourselves with the oppressor's definition of us, but rather to affirm that our movement had a history and to emphasize the political link with the old feminist movement.

It is, then, this movement that we can put in question for the meaning that it gave to feminism. It so happens that feminism in the last century could never resolve its contradictions on the subject of nature/culture, woman/society. Women started to fight for themselves as a group and rightly considered that they shared common features as a result of oppression. But for them these features were natural and biological rather than social. They went so far as to adopt the Darwinist theory of evolution. They did not believe like Darwin, however, "that women were less evolved than men, but they did believe that male and female

natures had diverged in the course of evolutionary development and that society at large reflected this polarization."[14] "The failure of early feminism was that it only attacked the Darwinist charge of female inferiority, while accepting the foundations of this charge — namely, the view of woman as 'unique.'"[15] And finally it was women scholars — and not feminists — who scientifically destroyed this theory. But the early feminists had failed to regard history as a dynamic process which develops from conflicts of interests. Furthermore, they still believed as men do that the cause (origin) of their oppression lay within themselves. And therefore after some astonishing victories the feminists of this first front found themselves at an impasse out of a lack of reasons to fight. They upheld the illogical principle of "equality in difference," an idea now being born again. They fell back into the trap which threatens us once again: the myth of woman.

Thus it is our historical task, and only ours, to define what we call oppression in materialist terms, to make it evident that women are a class, which is to say that the category "woman" as well as the category "man" are political and economic categories not eternal ones. Our fight aims to suppress men as a class, not through a genocidal, but a political struggle. Once the class "men" disappears, "women" as a class will disappear as well, for there are no slaves without masters. Our first task, it seems, is to always thoroughly dissociate "women" (the class within which we fight) and "woman," the myth. For "woman" does not exist for us: it is only an imaginary formation, while "women" is the product of a social relationship. We felt this strongly when everywhere we refused to be called a "*woman's* liberation movement." Furthermore, we have to destroy the myth inside and outside ourselves. "Woman" is not each one of us, but the political

and ideological formation which negates "women" (the product of a relation of exploitation). "Woman" is there to confuse us, to hide the reality "women." In order to be aware of being a class and to become a class we first have to kill the myth of "woman" including its most seductive aspects (I think about Virginia Woolf when she said the first task of a woman writer is to kill "the angel in the house"). But to become a class we do not have to suppress our individual selves, and since no individual can be reduced to her/his oppression we are also confronted with the historical necessity of constituting ourselves as the individual subjects of our history as well. I believe this is the reason why all these attempts at "new" definitions of woman are blossoming now. What is at stake (and of course not only for women) is an individual definition as well as a class definition. For once one has acknowledged oppression, one needs to know and experience the fact that one can constitute oneself as a subject (as opposed to an object of oppression), that one can become *someone* in spite of oppression, that one has one's own identity. There is no possible fight for someone deprived of an identity, no internal motivation for fighting, since, although I can fight only with others, first I fight for myself.

The question of the individual subject is historically a difficult one for everybody. Marxism, the last avatar of materialism, the science which has politically formed us, does not want to hear anything about a "subject." Marxism has rejected the transcendental subject, the subject as constitutive of knowledge, the "pure" consciousness. All that thinks per se, before all experience, has ended up in the garbage can of history, because it claimed to exist outside matter, prior to matter, and needed God, spirit, or soul to exist in such a way. This is what is called "idealism." As for individuals, they are only the product of social relations, therefore their consciousness can only be "alienated." (Marx, in *The German Ideology,* says precisely that individuals of the dominating class are also alienated, although they are the direct producers of the ideas that alienate the classes oppressed by them. But since they draw visible advantages from their own alienation they can bear it without too much suffering.) There exists such a thing as class consciousness, but a consciousness which does not refer to a particular subject, except as participating in general conditions of exploitation at the same time as the other subjects of their class, all sharing the same consciousness. As for the practical class problems — outside of the class problems as traditionally defined — that one could encounter (for example, sexual problems), they were considered "bourgeois" problems that would disappear with the final victory of the class struggle. "Individualistic," "subjectivist," "petit bourgeois," these were the labels given to any person who had shown problems which could not be reduced to the "class struggle" itself.

Thus Marxism has denied the members of oppressed classes the attribute of being a subject. In doing this, Marxism, because of the ideological and political power this "revolutionary science" immediately exercised upon the workers' movement and all other political groups, has prevented all categories of oppressed peoples from constituting themselves historically as subjects (subjects of their struggle, for example). This means that the "masses" did not fight for themselves but for *the* party or its organizations. And when an economic transformation took place (end of private property, constitution of the socialist state), no revolutionary change took place within the new society, because the people themselves did not change.

For women, Marxism had two results. It prevented them from

being aware that they are a class and therefore from constituting themselves as a class for a very long time, by leaving the relation "women/men" outside of the social order, by turning it into a natural relation, doubtless for Marxists the only one, along with the relation of mothers to children, to be seen this way, and by hiding the class conflict between men and women behind a natural division of labor (*The German Ideology*). This concerns the theoretical (ideological) level. On the practical level, Lenin, *the* party, all the communist parties up to now, including all the most radical political groups, have always reacted to any attempt on the part of women to reflect and form groups based on their own class problem with an accusation of divisiveness. By uniting, we women are dividing the strength of the people. This means that for the Marxists women *belong* either to the bourgeois class or to the proletariat class, in other words, to the men of these classes. In addition, Marxist theory does not allow women any more than other classes of oppressed people to constitute themselves as historical subjects, because Marxism does not take into account the fact that a class also consists of individuals one by one. Class consciousness is not enough. We must try to understand philosophically (politically) these concepts of "subject" and "class consciousness" and how they work in relation to our history. When we discover that women are the objects of oppression and appropriation, at the very moment that we become able to perceive this, we become subjects in the sense of cognitive subjects, through an operation of abstraction. Consciousness of oppression is not only a reaction to (fight against) oppression. It is also the whole conceptual reevaluation of the social world, its whole reorganization with new concepts, from the point of view of oppression. It is what I would call the science of oppression

created by the oppressed. This operation of understanding reality has to be undertaken by every one of us: call it a subjective, cognitive practice. The movement back and forth between the levels of reality (the conceptual reality and the material reality of oppression, which are both social realities) is accomplished through language.

It is we who historically must undertake the task of defining the individual subject in materialist terms. This certainly seems to be an impossibility since materialism and subjectivity have always been mutually exclusive. Nevertheless, and rather than despairing of ever understanding, we must recognize the *need* to reach subjectivity in the abandonment by many of us to the myth "woman" (the myth of woman being only a snare that holds us up). This real necessity for everyone to exist as an individual, as well as a member of a class, is perhaps the first condition for the accomplishment of a revolution, without which there can be no real fight or transformation. But the opposite is also true; without class and class consciousness there are no real subjects, only alienated individuals. For women to answer the question of the individual subject in materialist terms is first to show, as the lesbians and feminists did, that supposedly "subjective," "individual," "private" problems are in fact social problems, class problems; that sexuality is not for women an individual and subjective expression, but a social institution of violence. But once we have shown that all so-called personal problems are in fact class problems, we will still be left with the question of the subject of each singular woman — not the myth, but each one of us. At this point, let us say that a new personal and subjective definition for all humankind can only be found beyond the cat-

egories of sex (woman and man) and that the advent of individual subjects demands first destroying the categories of sex, ending the use of them, and rejecting all sciences which still use these categories as their fundamentals (practically all social sciences).

To destroy "woman" does not mean that we aim, short of physical destruction, to destroy lesbianism simultaneously with the categories of sex, because lesbianism provides for the moment the only social form in which we can live freely. Lesbian is the only concept I know of which is beyond the categories of sex (woman and man), because the designated subject (lesbian) is *not* a woman, either economically, or politically, or ideologically. For what makes a woman is a specific social relation to a man, a relation that we have previously called servitude,[16] a relation which implies personal and physical obligation as well as economic obligation ("forced residence,"[17] domestic corvée, conjugal duties, unlimited production of children, etc.), a relation which lesbians escape by refusing to become or to stay heterosexual. We are escapees from our class in the same way as the American runaway slaves were when escaping slavery and becoming free. For us this is an absolute necessity; our survival demands that we contribute all our strength to the destruction of the class of women within which men appropriate women. This can be accomplished only by the destruction of heterosexuality as a social system which is based on the oppression of women by men and which produces the doctrine of the difference between the sexes to justify this oppression.

THE STRAIGHT MIND[1]

1980

In recent years in Paris, language as a phenomenon has dominated modern theoretical systems and the social sciences and has entered the political discussions of the lesbian and women's liberation movements. This is because it relates to an important political field where what is at play is power, or more than that, a network of powers, since there is a multiplicity of languages that constantly act upon the social reality. The importance of language as such as a political stake has only recently been perceived.[2] But the gigantic development of linguistics, the multiplication of schools of linguistics, the advent of the sciences of communication, and the technicality of the metalanguages that these sciences utilize, represent the symptoms of the importance of what is politically at stake. The science of language has invaded other sciences, such as anthropology through Lévi-Strauss, psychoanalysis through Lacan, and all the disciplines which have developed from the basis of structuralism.

The early semiology of Roland Barthes nearly escaped from linguistic domination to become a political analysis of the different systems of signs, to establish a relationship between this or that system of signs — for example, the myths of the petit

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GENDER TROUBLE

JUDITH BUTLER

FEMINISM AND THE SUBVERSION OF IDENTITY

1990

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1

Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire

One is not born a woman, but rather becomes one.
—Simone de Beauvoir
Strictly speaking, "women" cannot be said to exist.
—Julia Kristeva
Woman does not have a sex.
—Luce Irigaray
The deployment of sexuality . . . established this notion of sex.
—Michel Foucault
The category of sex is the political category that founds society as heterosexual.
—Monique Wittig

i. "Women" as the Subject of Feminism

For the most part, feminist theory has assumed that there is some existing identity, understood through the category of women, who not only initiates feminist interests and goals within discourse, but constitutes the subject for whom political representation is pursued. But *politics* and *representation* are controversial terms. On the one hand, *representation* serves as the operative term within a political process that seeks to extend visibility and legitimacy to women as political subjects; on the other hand, representation is the normative function of a language which is said either to reveal or to distort what is assumed to be true about the category of women. For feminist theory, the development of a language that fully or adequately represents women has seemed necessary to foster the political visibility of women. This has seemed obviously important considering the pervasive cultural condition in which women's lives were either misrepresented or not represented at all.

Recently, this prevailing conception of the relation between feminist theory and politics has come under challenge from within feminist discourse. The very subject of women is no longer understood in stable or abiding terms. There is a great deal of material that not only questions the viability of "the subject" as the ultimate candidate for representation or, indeed, liberation, but there is very little agreement after all on what it is that constitutes, or ought to constitute, the category of women. The domains of political and linguistic "representation" set out in advance the criterion by which subjects themselves are formed, with the result that representation is extended only to what can be acknowledged as a subject. In other words, the qualifica-

- Judith Butler
- Eve Sedgwick
  Performativity
- the term woman?
- Question of aims / goals.

more natural — equal

Sex | gender

nature | nurture.

has become one term there is no difference anymore.
talking more about physical body

consciousness

Have to see everything under one umbrella, & see that this is interchangeable.

tions for being a subject must first be met before representation can be extended.

Foucault points out that juridical systems of power *produce* the subjects they subsequently come to represent.[1] Juridical notions of power appear to regulate political life in purely negative terms—that is, through the limitation, prohibition, regulation, control and even "protection" of individuals related to that political structure through the contingent and retractable operation of choice. But the subjects regulated by such structures are, by virtue of being subjected to them, formed, defined, and reproduced in accordance with the requirements of those structures. If this analysis is right, then the juridical formation of language and politics that represents women as "the subject" of feminism is itself a discursive formation and effect of a given version of representational politics. And the feminist subject turns out to be discursively constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate its emancipation. This becomes politically problematic if that system can be shown to produce gendered subjects along a differential axis of domination or to produce subjects who are presumed to be masculine. In such cases, an uncritical appeal to such a system for the emancipation of "women" will be clearly self-defeating.

The question of "the subject" is crucial for politics, and for feminist politics in particular, because juridical subjects are invariably produced through certain exclusionary practices that do not "show" once the juridical structure of politics has been established. In other words, the political construction of the subject proceeds with certain legitimating and exclusionary aims, and these political operations are effectively concealed and naturalized by a political analysis that takes juridical structures as their foundation. Juridical power inevitably "produces" what it claims merely to represent; hence, politics must be concerned with this dual function of power: the juridical and the productive. In effect, the law produces and then conceals the notion of "a subject before the law"[2] in order to invoke that discursive formation as a naturalized foundational premise that subsequently legitimates that law's own regulatory hegemony. It is not enough to inquire into how women might become more fully represented in language and politics. Feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of "women," the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought.

Indeed, the question of women as the subject of feminism raises the possibility that there may not be a subject who stands "before" the law, awaiting representation in or by the law. Perhaps the subject, as

well as the invocation of a temporal "before," is constituted by the law as the fictive foundation of its own claim to legitimacy. The prevailing assumption of the ontological integrity of the subject before the law might be understood as the contemporary trace of the state of nature hypothesis, that foundationalist fable constitutive of the juridical structures of classical liberalism. The performative invocation of a nonhistorical "before" becomes the foundational premise that guarantees a presocial ontology of persons who freely consent to be governed and, thereby, constitute the legitimacy of the social contract.

Apart from the foundationalist fictions that support the notion of the subject, however, there is the political problem that feminism encounters in the assumption that the term *women* denotes a common identity. Rather than a stable signifier that commands the assent of those whom it purports to describe and represent, *women,* even in the plural, has become a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety. As Denise Riley's title suggests, *Am I That Name?* is a question produced by the very possibility of the name's multiple significations.[3] If one "is" a woman, that is surely not all one is; the term fails to be exhaustive, not because a pregendered "person" transcends the specific paraphernalia of its gender, but because gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts, and because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result, it becomes impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained.

The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. Where those various contexts have been consulted within such theories, it has been to find "examples" or "illustrations" of a universal principle that is assumed from the start. That form of feminist theorizing has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate non-Western cultures to support highly Western notions of oppression, but because they tend as well to construct a "Third World" or even an "Orient" in which gender oppression is subtly explained as symptomatic of an essential, non-Western barbarism. The urgency of feminism to

establish a universal status for patriarchy in order to strengthen the appearance of feminism's own claims to be representative has occasionally motivated the shortcut to a categorial or fictive universality of the structure of domination, held to produce women's common subjugated experience.

Although the claim of universal patriarchy no longer enjoys the kind of credibility it once did, the notion of a generally shared conception of "women," the corollary to that framework, has been much more difficult to displace. Certainly, there have been plenty of debates: Is there some commonality among "women" that preexists their oppression, or do "women" have a bond by virtue of their oppression alone? Is there a specificity to women's cultures that is independent of their subordination by hegemonic, masculinist cultures? Are the specificity and integrity of women's cultural or linguistic practices always specified against and, hence, within the terms of some more dominant cultural formation? If there is a region of the "specifically feminine," one that is both differentiated from the masculine as such and recognizable in its difference by an unmarked and, hence, presumed universality of "women"? The masculine/feminine binary constitutes not only the exclusive framework in which that specificity can be recognized, but in every other way the "specificity" of the feminine is once again fully decontextualized and separated off analytically and politically from the constitution of class, race, ethnicity, and other axes of power relations that both constitute "identity" and make the singular notion of identity a misnomer.[4]

My suggestion is that the presumed universality and unity of the subject of feminism is effectively undermined by the constraints of the representational discourse in which it functions. Indeed, the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism, understood as a seamless category of women, inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category. These domains of exclusion reveal the coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction, even when the construction has been elaborated for emancipatory purposes. Indeed, the fragmentation within feminism and the paradoxical opposition to feminism from "women" whom feminism claims to represent suggest the necessary limits of identity politics. The suggestion that feminism can seek wider representation for a subject that it itself constructs has the ironic consequence that feminist goals risk failure by refusing to take account of the constitutive powers of their own representational claims. This problem is not ameliorated through an appeal to the category of women for merely "strategic" purposes, for strategies always have meanings that exceed the purposes for which they are intended. In this case, exclusion itself might qualify as such an unintended yet consequential meaning. By conforming to a requirement of representational politics that feminism articulate a stable subject, feminism thus opens itself to charges of gross misrepresentation.

Obviously, the political task is not to refuse representational politics—as if we could. The juridical structures of language and politics constitute the contemporary field of power; hence, there is no position outside this field, but only a critical genealogy of its own legitimating practices. As such, the critical point of departure is *the historical present,* as Marx put it. And the task is to formulate within this constituted frame a critique of the categories of identity that contemporary juridical structures engender, naturalize, and immobilize.

Perhaps there is an opportunity at this juncture of cultural politics, a period that some would call "postfeminist," to reflect from within a feminist perspective on the injunction to construct a subject of feminism. Within feminist political practice, a radical rethinking of the ontological constructions of identity appears to be necessary in order to formulate a representational politics that might revive feminism on other grounds. On the other hand, it may be time to entertain a radical critique that seeks to free feminist theory from the necessity of having to construct a single or abiding ground which is invariably contested by those identity positions or anti–identity positions that it invariably excludes. Do the exclusionary practices that ground feminist theory in a notion of "women" as subject paradoxically undercut feminist goals to extend its claims to "representation"?[5]

Perhaps the problem is even more serious. Is the construction of the category of women as a coherent and stable subject an unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations? And is not such a reification precisely contrary to feminist aims? To what extent does the category of women achieve stability and coherence only in the context of the heterosexual matrix?[6] If a stable notion of gender no longer proves to be the foundational premise of feminist politics, perhaps a new sort of feminist politics is now desirable to contest the very reifications of gender and identity, one that will take the variable construction of identity as both a methodological and normative prerequisite, if not a political goal.

To trace the political operations that produce and conceal what qualifies as the juridical subject of feminism is precisely the task of *a feminist genealogy* of the category of women. In the course of this effort to question "women" as the subject of feminism, the unproblematic invocation of that category may prove to *preclude* the possibility of feminism as a representational politics. What sense does it make to extend representation to subjects who are constructed through

the exclusion of those who fail to conform to unspoken normative requirements of the subject? What relations of domination and exclusion are inadvertently sustained when representation becomes the sole focus of politics? The identity of the feminist subject ought not to be the foundation of feminist politics, if the formation of the subject takes place within a field of power regularly buried through the assertion of that foundation. Perhaps, paradoxically, "representation" will be shown to make sense for feminism only when the subject of "women" is nowhere presumed.

ii. The Compulsory Order of Sex/Gender/Desire

Although the unproblematic unity of "women" is often invoked to construct a solidarity of identity, a split is introduced in the feminist subject by the distinction between sex and gender. Originally intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of the subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex.[7]

If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way. Taken to its logical limit, the sex/gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed genders. Assuming for the moment the stability of binary sex, it does not follow that the construction of "men" will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that "women" will interpret only female bodies. Further, even if the sexes appear to be unproblematically binary in their morphology and constitution (which will become a question), there is no reason to assume that genders ought also to remain as two.[8] The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that *man* and *masculine* might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and *woman* and *feminine* a male body as easily as a female one.

This radical splitting of the gendered subject poses yet another set of problems. Can we refer to a "given" sex or a "given" gender without first inquiring into how sex and/or gender is given, through what means? And what is "sex" anyway? Is it natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal, and how is a feminist critic to assess the

scientific discourses which purport to establish such "facts" for us?[9] Does sex have a history?[10] Does each sex have a different history, or histories? Is there a history of how the duality of sex was established, a genealogy that might expose the binary options as a variable construction? Are the ostensibly natural facts of sex discursively produced by various scientific discourses in the service of other political and social interests? If the immutable character of sex is contested, perhaps this construct called "sex" is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was always already gender, with the consequence that the distinction between sex and gender turns out to be no distinction at all.[11]

It would make no sense, then, to define gender as the cultural interpretation of sex, if sex itself is a gendered category. Gender ought not to be conceived merely as the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex (a juridical conception); gender must also designate the very apparatus of production whereby the sexes themselves are established. As a result, gender is not to culture as sex is to nature; gender is also the discursive/cultural means by which "sexed nature" or "a natural sex" is produced and established as "prediscursive," prior to culture, a politically neutral surface *on which* culture acts. This construction of "sex" as the radically unconstructed will concern us again in the discussion of Lévi-Strauss and structuralism in chapter 2. At this juncture it is already clear that one way the internal stability and binary frame for sex is effectively secured is by casting the duality of sex in a prediscursive domain. This production of sex *as* the prediscursive ought to be understood as the effect of the apparatus of cultural construction designated by *gender*. How, then, does gender need to be reformulated to encompass the power relations that produce the effect of a prediscursive sex and so conceal that very operation of discursive production?

iii. Gender: The Circular Ruins of Contemporary Debate

Is there "a" gender which persons are said *to have*, or is it an essential attribute that a person is said *to be*, as implied in the question "What gender are you?"? When feminist theorists claim that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or that gender is culturally constructed, what is the manner or mechanism of this construction? If gender is constructed, could it be constructed differently, or does its constructedness imply some form of social determinism, foreclosing the possibility of agency and transformation? Does "construction" suggest that certain laws generate gender differences along universal axes of sexual difference? How and where does the construction of

gender take place? What sense can we make of a construction that cannot assume a human constructor prior to that construction? On some accounts, the notion that gender is constructed suggests a certain determinism of gender meanings inscribed on anatomically differentiated bodies, where those bodies are understood as passive recipients of an inexorable cultural law. When the relevant "culture" that "constructs" gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny.

On the other hand, Simone de Beauvoir suggests in *The Second Sex* that "one is not born a woman, but, rather, becomes one."[12] For Beauvoir, gender is "constructed," but implied in her formulation is an agent, a *cogito,* who somehow takes on or appropriates that gender and could, in principle, take on some other gender. Is gender as variable and volitional as Beauvoir's account seems to suggest? Can "construction" in such a case be reduced to a form of choice? Beauvoir is clear that one "becomes" a woman, but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. And clearly, the compulsion does not come from "sex." There is nothing in her account that guarantees that the "one" who becomes a woman is necessarily female. If "the body is a situation,"[13] as she claims, there is no recourse to a body that has not always already been interpreted by cultural meanings; hence, sex could not qualify as a prediscursive anatomical facticity. Indeed, sex, by definition, will be shown to have been gender all along.[14]

The controversy over the meaning of *construction* appears to founder on the conventional philosophical polarity between free will and determinism. As a consequence, one might reasonably suspect that some common linguistic restriction on thought both forms and limits the terms of the debate. Within those terms, "the body" appears as a passive medium on which cultural meanings are inscribed or as the instrument through which an appropriative and interpretive will determines a cultural meaning for itself. In either case, the body is figured as a mere *instrument* or *medium* for which a set of cultural meanings are only externally related. But "the body" it itself a construction, as are the myriad "bodies" that constitute the domain of gendered subjects. Bodies cannot be said to have a signifiable existence prior to the mark of their gender; the question then emerges: To what extent does the body *come into being* in and through the mark(s) of gender? How do we reconceive the body no longer as a passive medium or instrument awaiting the enlivening capacity of a distinctly immaterial will?[15]

Whether gender or sex is fixed or free is a function of a discourse which, it will be suggested, seeks to set certain limits to analysis or to safeguard certain tenets of humanism as presuppositional to any analysis of gender. The locus of intractability, whether in "sex" or "gender" or in the very meaning of "construction," provides a clue to what cultural possibilities can and cannot become mobilized through any further analysis. The limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and preempt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture. This is not to say that any and all gendered possibilities are open, but that the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a discursively conditioned experience. These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse predicated on binary structures that appear as the language of universal rationality. Constraint is thus built into what that language constitutes as the imaginable domain of gender.

Although social scientists refer to gender as a "factor" or a "dimension" of an analysis, it is also applied to embodied persons as "a mark" of biological, linguistic, and/or cultural difference. In these latter cases, gender can be understood as a signification that an (already) sexually differentiated body assumes, but even then that signification exists only *in relation* to another, opposing signification. Some feminist theorists claim that gender is "a relation," indeed, a set of relations, and not an individual attribute. Others, following Beauvoir, would argue that only the feminine gender is marked, that the universal person and the masculine gender are conflated, thereby defining women in terms of their sex and extolling men as the bearers of a body-transcendent universal personhood.

In a move that complicates the discussion further, Luce Irigaray argues that women constitute a paradox, if not a contradiction, within the discourse of identity itself. Women are the "sex" which is not "one." Within a language pervasively masculinist, a phallogocentric language, women constitute the *unrepresentable.* In other words, women represent the sex that cannot be thought, a linguistic absence and opacity. Within a language that rests on univocal signification, the female sex constitutes the unconstrainable and undesignatable. In this sense, women are the sex which is not "one," but multiple.[16] In opposition to Beauvoir, for whom women are designated as the Other, Irigaray argues that both the subject and the Other are masculine mainstays of a closed phallogocentric signifying economy that achieves its totalizing goal through the exclusion of the feminine altogether. For Beauvoir, women are the negative of men, the lack

against which masculine identity differentiates itself; for Irigaray, that particular dialectic constitutes a system that excludes an entirely different economy of signification. Women are not only represented falsely within the Sartrian frame of signifying-subject and signified-Other, but the falsity of the signification points out the entire structure of representation as inadequate. The sex which is not one, then, provides a point of departure for a criticism of hegemonic Western representation and of the metaphysics of substance that structures the very notion of the subject.

What is the metaphysics of substance, and how does it inform thinking about the categories of sex? In the first instance, humanist conceptions of the subject tend to assume a substantive person who is the bearer of various essential and nonessential attributes. A humanist feminist position might understand gender as an *attribute* of a person who is characterized essentially as a pregendered substance or "core," called the person, denoting a universal capacity for reason, moral deliberation, or language. The universal conception of the person, however, is displaced as a point of departure for a social theory of gender by those historical and anthropological positions that understand gender as a *relation* among socially constituted subjects in specifiable contexts. This relational or contextual point of view suggests that what the person "is," and, indeed, what gender "is," is always relative to the constructed relations in which it is determined.[17] As a shifting and contextual phenomenon, gender does not denote a substantive being, but a relative point of convergence among culturally and historically specific sets of relations.

Irigaray would maintain, however, that the feminine "sex" is a point of linguistic *absence,* the impossibility of a grammatically denoted substance, and, hence, the point of view that exposes that substance as an abiding and foundational illusion of a masculinist discourse. This absence is not marked as such within the masculine signifying economy—a contention that reverses Beauvoir's argument (and Wittig's) that the female sex *is* marked, while the male sex is not. For Irigaray, the female sex is not a "lack" or an "Other" that immanently and negatively defines the subject in its masculinity. On the contrary, the female sex eludes the very requirements of representation, for she is neither "Other" nor the "lack," those categories remaining relative to the Sartrian subject, immanent to that phallogocentric scheme. Hence, for Irigaray, the feminine could never be the *mark of a subject,* as Beauvoir would suggest. Further, the feminine could not be theorized in terms of a determinate *relation* between the masculine and the feminine within any given discourse, for discourse

is not a relevant notion here. Even in their variety, discourses constitute so many modalities of phallogocentric language. The female sex is thus also *the subject* that is not one. The relation between masculine and feminine cannot be represented in a signifying economy in which the masculine constitutes the closed circle of signifier and signified. Paradoxically enough, Beauvoir prefigured this impossibility in *The Second Sex* when she argued that men could not settle the question of women because they would then be acting as both judge and party to the case.[18]

The distinctions among the above positions are far from discrete; each of them can be understood to problematize the locality and meaning of both the "subject" and "gender" within the context of socially instituted gender asymmetry. The interpretive possibilities of gender are in no sense exhausted by the alternatives suggested above. The problematic circularity of a feminist inquiry into gender is underscored by the presence of positions which, on the one hand, presume that gender is a secondary characteristic of persons and those which, on the other hand, argue that the very notion of the person, positioned within language as a "subject," is a masculinist construction and prerogative which effectively excludes the structural and semantic possibility of a feminine gender. The consequence of such sharp disagreements about the meaning of gender (indeed, whether *gender* is the term to be argued about at all, or whether the discursive construction of *sex* is, indeed, more fundamental, or perhaps *women* or *woman* and/or *men* and *man*) establishes the need for a radical rethinking of the categories of identity within the context of relations of radical gender asymmetry.

For Beauvoir, the "subject" within the existential analytic of misogyny is always already masculine, conflated with the universal, differentiating itself from a feminine "Other" outside the universalizing norms of personhood, hopelessly "particular," embodied, condemned to immanence. Although Beauvoir is often understood to be calling for the right of women, in effect, to become existential subjects and, hence, for inclusion within the terms of an abstract universality, her position also implies a fundamental critique of the very disembodiment of the abstract masculine epistemological subject.[19] That subject is abstract to the extent that it disavows its socially marked embodiment and, further, projects that disavowed and disparaged embodiment on to the feminine sphere, effectively renaming the body as female. This association of the body with the female works along magical relations of reciprocity whereby the female sex becomes restricted to its body, and the male body, fully disavowed, becomes,

paradoxically, the incorporeal instrument of an ostensibly radical freedom. Beauvoir's analysis implicitly poses the question: Through what act of negation and disavowal does the masculine pose as a disembodied universality and the feminine get constructed as a disavowed corporeality? The dialectic of master-slave, here fully reformulated within the nonreciprocal terms of gender asymmetry, prefigures what Irigaray will later describe as the masculine signifying economy that includes both the existential subject and its Other.

Beauvoir proposes that the female body ought to be the situation and instrumentality of women's freedom, not a defining and limiting essence.[20] The theory of embodiment informing Beauvoir's analysis is clearly limited by the uncritical reproduction of the Cartesian distinction between freedom and the body. Despite my own previous efforts to argue the contrary, it appears that Beauvoir maintains the mind/body dualism, even as she proposes a synthesis of those terms.[21] The preservation of that very distinction can be read as symptomatic of the very phallogocentrism that Beauvoir underestimates. In the philosophical tradition that begins with Plato and continues through Descartes, Husserl, and Sartre, the ontological distinction between soul (consciousness, mind) and body invariably supports relations of political and psychic subordination and hierarchy. The mind not only subjugates the body, but occasionally entertains the fantasy of fleeing its embodiment altogether. The cultural associations of mind with masculinity and body with femininity are well documented within the field of philosophy and feminism.[22] As a result, any uncritical reproduction of the mind/body distinction ought to be rethought for the implicit gender hierarchy that the distinction has conventionally produced, maintained, and rationalized.

The discursive construction of "the body" and its separation from "freedom" in Beauvoir fails to mark along the axis of gender the very mind-body distinction that is supposed to illuminate the persistence of gender asymmetry. Officially, Beauvoir contends that the female body is marked within masculinist discourse, whereby the masculine body, in its conflation with the universal, remains unmarked. Irigaray clearly suggests that both marker and marked are maintained within a masculinist mode of signification in which the female body is "marked off," as it were, from the domain of the signifiable. In post-Hegelian terms, she is "cancelled," but not preserved. On Irigaray's reading, Beauvoir's claim that woman "is sex" is reversed to mean that she is not the sex she is designated to be, but, rather, the masculine sex *encore* (and *en corps*) parading in the mode of otherness. For Irigaray, that phallogocentric mode of signifying the female sex perpetually

reproduces phantasms of its own self-amplifying desire. Instead of a self-limiting linguistic gesture that grants alterity or difference to women, phallogocentrism offers a name to eclipse the feminine and take its place.

PRIMARY TEXTS

ESSAYS:

1. John Ruskin-- " Of Queens' Gardens"

POEMS

1. Coventry Patmore--"The Angel in the House"
2. Elizabeth Barrett Browning--"The Romaunt of the Page"
3. Eliza Cook--"Song of the Ugly Maiden"
4. Robert Browning--" Porphyria's Lover"
5. Arthur Munby--"The Serving Maid" & "A Husband's Episodes"

DIARIES

1. Selns from *The Diaries of Hannah Cullwick Victorian Maidservant*, ed by Liz Stanley
2. Selns from Derek Hudson's *Munby: Man of Two Worlds*.

lady), is a great production,—a better production than most statues; being beautifully coloured as well as shaped, and plus all the brains; a glorious thing to look at, a wonderful thing to talk to; and you cannot have it, any more than a pyramid or a church, but by sacrifice of much contributed life. And it is, perhaps, better to build a beautiful human creature than a beautiful dome or steeple—and more delightful to look up reverently to a creature far above us, than to a wall; only the beautiful human creature will have some duties to do in return—duties of living belfry and rampart—of which presently.[1]

[1] [This passage was originally (as explained above) a footnote to § 30; and the reference in "presently" is to §§ 42 *seq.*]

- 19th century intellectual
- Art Critic
- William Morris
- printing press
Poems of Tennyson
verse of Chaucer

1st pt - women's nature
and women's education

3rd - social responsibilities,
social women's role

Woolf/Ruskin
1.) formal
2.) less personal
3.) straight forward
4.) easier to comprehend
5.) dry - lack of imagery - masculine
6.) less enjoyable

JOHN RUSKIN 1819 - 1900

Based on 2 lectures
sesame & lilies
1.) of Kings Treasuries
2.) of Queens Gardens

LECTURE II.—LILIES

OF QUEENS' GARDENS

angel in the house
together the Domestic ideology

"Be thou glad, oh thirsting Desert; let the desert be made cheerful, and bloom as the lily; and the barren places of Jordan shall run wild with wood."—ISAIAH XXXV. 1 (Septuagint[1]).

51. IT will, perhaps, be well, as this Lecture is the sequel of one previously given, that I should shortly state to you my general intention in both. The questions specially proposed to you in the first, namely, How and What to Read, rose out of a far deeper one, which it was my endeavour to make you propose earnestly to yourselves, namely, *Why* to Read. I want you to feel, with me, that whatever advantages we possess in the present day in the diffusion of education and of literature, can only be rightly used by any of us when we have apprehended clearly what education is to lead to, and literature to teach. I wish you to see that both well-directed moral training and well-chosen reading lead to the possession of a power over the ill-guided and illiterate, which is, according to the measure of it, in the truest sense, *kingly;* conferring indeed the purest

[1] [In eds. 1-4 the motto was different:—

ὡς κρίνον ἐν μέσῳ ἀκανθῶν, οὕτως ἡ πλησίον μου

—with a footnote referring to "Canticles ii. 2." "*As the lily among thorns, so is my love* among the daughters." In his own copy of the first edition, Ruskin had substituted for the Greek, "Et breve Lilium"—from one of his favourite lines in Horace (*Odes*, i. 36, 16). "What a glorious line of Horace that is," he wrote to his father (Mornex, September 16, 1863), "of the flowers laid on his table when his friend returns—

"'*Neu vivax apium, neu breve Lilium*'—

the life of the green plant, and fading of the blossom, in two words; but I can't give you the sweet metre of it; you ought to hear it sung, as it was meant to be; and the expiring of the last short low syllables."]

a little about personal life
7.) his intention, contradictory
8.) References to Lit
9.) audience - working class.

kingship that can exist among men: too many other kingships (however distinguished by visible insignia or material power) being either spectral, or tyrannous;—spectral—that is to say, aspects and shadows only of royalty, hollow as death, and which only the "likeness of a kingly crown have on:"[1] or else—tyrannous—that is to say, substituting their own will for the law of justice and love by which all true kings rule.

52. There is, then, I repeat—and as I want to leave this idea with you, I begin with it, and shall end with it—only one pure kind of kingship; an inevitable and eternal kind, crowned or not; the kingship, namely, which consists in a stronger moral state, and a truer thoughtful state, than that of others; enabling you, therefore, to guide, or to raise them. Observe that word "State"; we have got into a loose way of using it. It means literally the standing and stability of a thing; and you have the full force of it in the derived word "statue"—"the immovable thing." A king's majesty or "state," then, and the right of his kingdom to be called a state, depends on the movelessness of both:—without tremor, without quiver of balance; established and enthroned upon a foundation of eternal law which nothing can alter, nor overthrow.

53. Believing that all literature and all education are only useful so far as they tend to confirm this calm, beneficent, and *therefore* kingly, power—first, over ourselves, and, through ourselves, over all around us,—I am now going to ask you to consider with me farther, what special portion or kind of this royal authority, arising out of noble education, may rightly be possessed by women; and how far they also are called to a true queenly power,—not in their households merely, but over all within their sphere. And in what sense, if they rightly understood and exercised this royal or gracious influence, the order and beauty induced by such benignant power would justify us in speaking

[1] [*Paradise Lost*, ii. 673.]

of the territories over which each of them reigned, as "Queens' Gardens."

54. And here, in the very outset, we are met by a far deeper question, which—strange though this may seem—remains among many of us yet quite undecided in spite of its infinite importance.

We cannot determine what the queenly power of women should be, until we are agreed what their ordinary power should be. We cannot consider how education may fit them for any widely extending duty, until we are agreed what is their true constant duty. And there never was a time when wilder words were spoken, or more vain imagination permitted, respecting this question—quite vital to all social happiness. The relations of the womanly to the manly nature, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue, seem never to have been yet estimated with entire consent. We hear of the "mission" and of the "rights" of Woman, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and the rights of Man—as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind, and of irreconcilable claim. This, at least, is wrong. And not less wrong—perhaps even more foolishly wrong (for I will anticipate thus far what I hope to prove)—is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude.

This, I say, is the most foolish of all errors respecting her who was made to be the helpmate of man. As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow, or worthily by a slave!

55. Let us try, then, whether we cannot get at some clear and harmonious idea (it must be harmonious if it is true) of what womanly mind and virtue are in power and office, with respect to man's; and how their relations, rightly accepted, aid and increase the vigour and honour and authority of both.

And now I must repeat one thing I said in the last

lecture:[1] namely, that the first use of education was to enable us to consult with the wisest and the greatest men on all points of earnest difficulty. That to use books rightly, was to go to them for help: to appeal to them, when our own knowledge and power of thought failed: to be led by them into wider sight,—purer conception,—than our own, and receive from them the united sentence of the judges and councils of all time, against our solitary and unstable opinion.

Let us do this now. Let us see whether the greatest, the wisest, the purest-hearted of all ages are agreed in any wise on this point: let us hear the testimony they have left respecting what they held to be the true dignity of woman and her mode of help to man.

56. And first let us take Shakespeare.

Note broadly in the outset, Shakespeare has no heroes;—he has only heroines. There is not one entirely heroic figure in all his plays, except the slight sketch of Henry the Fifth, exaggerated for the purposes of the stage; and the still slighter Valentine in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In his laboured and perfect plays you have no hero. Othello would have been one, if his simplicity had not been so great as to leave him the prey of every base practice round him; but he is the only example even approximating to the heroic type. Coriolanus—Cæsar—Antony stand in flawed strength, and fall by their vanities;—Hamlet is indolent, and drowsily speculative; Romeo an impatient boy; the Merchant of Venice languidly submissive to adverse fortune; Kent, in *King Lear*, is entirely noble at heart, but too rough and unpolished to be of true use at the critical time, and he sinks into the office of a servant only. Orlando, no less noble, is yet the despairing toy of chance, followed, comforted, saved by Rosalind. Whereas there is hardly a play that has not a perfect woman in it, steadfast in grave hope, and errorless purpose:

[1] [Above, p. 58, § 6.]

Cordelia, Desdemona, Isabella, Hermione, Imogen, Queen Catherine, Perdita, Sylvia, Viola, Rosalind, Helena, and last, and perhaps loveliest, Virgilia, are all faultless; conceived in the highest heroic type of humanity.[1]

57. Then observe, secondly,

The catastrophe of every play is caused always by the folly or fault of a man; the redemption, if there be any, is by the wisdom and virtue of a woman, and, failing that, there is none. The catastrophe of King Lear is owing to his own want of judgment, his impatient vanity, his misunderstanding of his children; the virtue of his one true daughter would have saved him from all the injuries of the others, unless he had cast her away from him; as it is, she all but saves him.

Of Othello I need not trace the tale;—nor the one weakness of his so mighty love; nor the inferiority of his perceptive intellect to that even of the second woman character in the play, the Emilia who dies in wild testimony against his error:—

> "Oh, murderous coxcomb! what should such a fool
> Do with so good a wife?"[2]

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the wise and brave stratagem of the wife is brought to ruinous issue by the reckless impatience of her husband. In *Winter's Tale*, and in *Cymbeline*, the happiness and existence of two princely households, lost through long years, and imperilled to the death by the folly and obstinacy of the husbands, are redeemed at last by the queenly patience and wisdom of the wives. In *Measure for Measure*, the foul injustice of the judge, and the foul cowardice of the brother, are opposed

[1] [For Ruskin's many references to the plays and characters here mentioned, see the General Index. Compare, especially, for Cordelia and Virgilia—"the two women whom he has gifted with the deepest souls," *Academy Notes*, 1855 (Vol. XIV. p. 16); for Perdita—"the most perfect study of the opposite of vulgarity," *Academy Notes*, 1859 (Vol. XIV. p. 243 *n.*), and *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. p. 442); for Ophelia, *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. (Vol. VI. pp. 441–442); and for Othello, *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 63 and 91.]

[2] [Act v. sc. 2, 236.]

to the victorious truth and adamantine purity of a woman. In *Coriolanus*, the mother's counsel, acted upon in time, would have saved her son from all evil; his momentary forgetfulness of it is his ruin; her prayer, at last granted, saves him—not, indeed, from death, but from the curse of living as the destroyer of his country.

And what shall I say of Julia, constant against the fickleness of a lover who is a mere wicked child?—of Helena, against the petulance and insult of a careless youth?—of the patience of Hero, the passion of Beatrice, and the calmly devoted wisdom of the "unlessoned girl,"[1] who appears among the helplessness, the blindness, and the vindictive passions of men, as a gentle angel, bringing courage and safety by her presence, and defeating the worst malignities of crime by what women are fancied most to fail in,—precision and accuracy of thought?[2]

58. Observe, further, among all the principal figures in Shakespeare's plays, there is only one weak woman—Ophelia; and it is because she fails Hamlet at the critical moment, and is not, and cannot in her nature be, a guide to him when he needs her most, that all the bitter catastrophe follows. Finally, though there are three wicked women among the principal figures—Lady Macbeth, Regan, and Goneril—they are felt at once to be frightful exceptions to the ordinary laws of life; fatal in their influence also, in proportion to the power for good which they have abandoned.

Such, in broad light, is Shakespeare's testimony to the position and character of women in human life. He represents them as infallibly faithful and wise counsellors,—incorruptibly just and pure examples—strong always to sanctify, even when they cannot save.

59. Not as in any wise comparable in knowledge of the

[1] [Portia's description of herself: *Merchant of Venice*, iii. 2, 159.]

[2] [Eds. 1–4 read:—
". . . as a gentle angel, to save merely by her presence, and defeat the worst intensities of crime by her smile?"]

nature of man,—still less in his understanding of the causes and courses of fate,—but only as the writer who has given us the broadest view of the conditions and modes of ordinary thought in modern society, I ask you next to receive the witness of Walter Scott.[1]

I put aside his merely romantic prose writings as of no value, and though the early romantic poetry is very beautiful, its testimony is of no weight, other than that of a boy's ideal. But his true works, studied from Scottish life, bear a true witness; and in the whole range of these, there are but three men who reach the heroic type*—Dandie Dinmont, Rob Roy, and Claverhouse; of these, one is a border farmer; another a freebooter; the third a soldier in a bad cause. And these touch the ideal of heroism only in their courage and faith, together with a strong, but uncultivated, or mistakenly applied, intellectual power; while his younger men are the gentlemanly playthings of fantastic fortune, and only by aid (or accident) of that fortune, survive, not vanquish, the trials they involuntarily sustain. Of any disciplined, or consistent character, earnest in a purpose wisely conceived, or dealing with forms of hostile evil, definitely challenged and resolutely subdued, there is no trace in his conceptions of young men. Whereas in his imaginations of women,—in the characters of Ellen Douglas, of Flora MacIvor, Rose Bradwardine, Catherine Seyton, Diana Vernon, Lilias Redgauntlet, Alice Bridgenorth, Alice Lee, and Jeanie Deans,—with endless varieties of grace, tenderness,

* I ought, in order to make this assertion fully understood, to have noted the various weaknesses which lower the ideal of other great characters of men in the Waverley novels—the selfishness and narrowness of thought in Redgauntlet, the weak religious enthusiasm in Edward Glendinning, and the like; and I ought to have noticed that there are several quite perfect characters sketched sometimes in the backgrounds; three—let us accept joyously this courtesy to England and her soldiers—are English officers: Colonel Gardiner, Colonel Talbot, and Colonel Mannering.

[1] [Here again for many references to the characters and tales, see the General Index; comparing especially the passages in *Fiction, Fair and Foul*.]

and intellectual power, we find in all a quite infallible[1] sense of dignity and justice; a fearless, instant, and untiring self-sacrifice, to even the appearance of duty, much more to its real claims; and, finally, a patient wisdom of deeply-restrained affection, which does infinitely more than protect its objects from a momentary error; it gradually forms, animates, and exalts the characters of the unworthy lovers, until, at the close of the tale, we are just able, and no more, to take patience in hearing of their unmerited success.

So that, in all cases, with Scott as with Shakespeare, it is the woman who watches over, teaches, and guides the youth; it is never, by any chance, the youth who watches over, or educates, his mistress.

60. Next take, though more briefly, graver testimony—that of the great Italians and Greeks. You know well the plan of Dante's great poem—that it is a love-poem to his dead lady; a song of praise for her watch over his soul. Stooping only to pity, never to love, she yet saves him from destruction—saves him from hell. He is going eternally astray in despair; she comes down from heaven to his help, and throughout the ascents of Paradise is his teacher, interpreting for him the most difficult truths, divine and human; and leading him, with rebuke upon rebuke, from star to star.

I do not insist upon Dante's conception; if I began I could not cease: besides, you might think this a wild imagination of one poet's heart. So I will rather read to you a few verses of the deliberate writing of a knight of Pisa to his living lady, wholly characteristic of the feeling of all the noblest men of the thirteenth, or early fourteenth, century, preserved among many other such records of knightly honour and love, which Dante Rossetti has gathered for us from among the early Italian poets.[2]

[1] [Eds. 1–4 add "and inevitable" after "infallible."]

[2] [The poem is by Pannuccio dal Bagno, Pisano: see Rossetti's *Dante and his Circle*, pp. 331–332 (ed. 1874).]

"[redacted]lo! thy law is passed
That [redacted]my love should manifestly be
To serve and honour thee:
And so I do; and my delight is full,
Accepted for the servant of thy rule.

"Without almost, I am all rapturous,
Since thus my will was set
To serve, thou flower of joy, thine excellence:
Nor ever seems it anything could rouse
A pain or a regret.
But on thee dwells my every thought and sense;
Considering that from thee all virtues spread
As from a fountain head,—
That in thy gift is wisdom's best avail,
And honour without fail,
With whom each sovereign good dwells separate,
Fulfilling the perfection of thy state.

"Lady, since I conceived
Thy pleasurable aspect in my heart,
My life has been apart
In shining brightness and the place of truth;
Which till that time, good sooth,
Groped among shadows in a darken'd place,
Where many hours and days
It hardly ever had remember'd good.
But now my servitude
Is thine, and I am full of joy and rest.
A man from a wild beast
Thou madest me, since for thy love I lived."

61. You may think perhaps a Greek knight would have had a lower estimate of women than this Christian lover. His spiritual subjection to them was indeed not so absolute; but as regards their own personal character, it was only because you could not have followed me so easily, that I did not take the Greek women instead of Shakespeare's; and instance, for chief ideal types of human beauty and faith, the simple mother's and wife's heart of Andromache; the divine, yet rejected wisdom of Cassandra; the playful kindness and simple princess-life of happy Nausicaa; the housewifely calm of that of Penelope, with its watch upon the sea; the ever patient, fearless, hopelessly devoted piety of the sister, and daughter, in Antigone; the bowing down of Iphigenia, lamb-like and silent; and finally, the expectation

of the resurrection, made clear to the soul of the Greeks in the return from her grave of that Alcestis, who, to save her husband, had passed calmly through the bitterness of death.[1]

62. Now I could multiply witness upon witness of this kind upon you if I had time. I would take Chaucer, and show you why he wrote a Legend of Good Women;[2] but no Legend of Good Men. I would take Spenser, and show you how all his fairy knights are sometimes deceived and sometimes vanquished; but the soul of Una is never darkened, and the spear of Britomart is never broken.[3] Nay, I could go back into the mythical teaching of the most ancient times, and show you how the great people,—by one of whose princesses it was appointed that the Lawgiver of all the earth should be educated[4] rather than by his own kindred;—how that great Egyptian people, wisest then of nations, gave to their Spirit of Wisdom the form of a Woman; and into her hand, for a symbol, the weaver's shuttle; and how the name and the form of that spirit, adopted, believed, and obeyed by the Greeks, became that Athena of the olive-helm, and cloudy shield, to faith in whom you owe, down to this date, whatever you hold most precious in art, in literature, or in types of national virtue.[5]

63. But I will not wander into this distant and mythical element; I will only ask you to give its legitimate value to the testimony of these great poets and men of the world,—consistent, as you see it is, on this head. I will ask you

[1] [For other references to Nausicaa, see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. p. 236); to Penelope, *Queen of the Air*, §§ 24, 33; to Antigone, *Modern Painters*, vol. v. (Vol. VII. p. 272), and *Val d'Arno*, § 214; to Iphigenia, below, p. 285 *n.*, and *Art of England*, § 13, *Mornings in Florence*, § 40; to Alcestis, *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. (Vol. IV. p. 204), and vol. v. (Vol. VII. p. 273 *n.*), and *Lectures on Art*, § 92.]

[2] [Compare *Ethics of the Dust*, Note i. (below, p. 361).]

[3] [For Una, see *Stones of Venice*, vol. ii. (Vol. X. p. 409), and vol. iii., Appendix 2 (Vol. XI. pp. 251 *seq.*); for Britomart, Vol. X. pp. 393, 408; *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 119 (below, p. 482); and *The Study of Architecture*, § 10 (Vol. XIX.).]

[4] [See Exodus ii. 10.]

[5] [What Ruskin here suggests that he could do, he presently did in his book upon Athena, *The Queen of the Air*. For Neith, the corresponding goddess of the Egyptians, see § 14 of that book (Vol. XIX.); and *Ethics of the Dust*, Note iii. (below, p. 364).]

whether it can be supposed that these men, in the main work of their lives, are [redacted]ing themselves with a fictitious and idle view of the relations between man and woman; —nay, worse than fictitious or idle; for a thing may be imaginary, yet desirable, if it were possible: but this, their ideal of woman, is, according to our common idea of the marriage relation, wholly undesirable. The woman, we say, is not to guide, nor even to think for herself. The man is always to be the wiser; he is to be the thinker, the ruler, the superior in knowledge and discretion, as in power.

64. Is it not somewhat important to make up our minds on this matter? Are all these great men mistaken, or are we? Are Shakespeare and Æschylus, Dante and Homer, merely dressing dolls for us; or, worse than dolls, unnatural visions, the realization of which, were it possible, would bring anarchy into all households and ruin into all affections? Nay, if you can suppose this, take lastly the evidence of facts, given by the human heart itself. In all Christian ages which have been remarkable for their purity or progress, there has been absolute yielding of obedient devotion, by the lover, to his mistress. I say *obedient*; —not merely enthusiastic and worshipping in imagination, but entirely subject, receiving from the beloved woman, however young, not only the encouragement, the praise, and the reward of all toil, but, so far as any choice is open, or any question difficult of decision, the *direction* of all toil. That chivalry, to the abuse and dishonour of which are attributable primarily whatever is cruel in war, unjust in peace, or corrupt and ignoble in domestic relations; and to the original purity and power of which we owe the defence alike of faith, of law, and of love; that chivalry, I say, in its very first conception of honourable life, assumes the subjection of the young knight to the command—should it even be the command in caprice—of his lady. It assumes this, because its masters knew that the first and necessary impulse of every truly taught and knightly heart is this of blind service to its lady: that

where that true faith and captivity are not, all wayward and wicked passion must be; and that in this rapturous obedience to the single love of his youth, is the sanctification of all man's strength, and the continuance of all his purposes. And this, not because such obedience would be safe, or honourable, were it ever rendered to the unworthy; but because it ought to be impossible for every noble youth—it *is* impossible for every one rightly trained—to love any one whose gentle counsel he cannot trust, or whose prayerful command he can hesitate to obey.

65. I do not insist by any farther argument on this, for I think it should commend itself at once to your knowledge of what has been and to your feeling of what should be. You cannot think that the buckling on of the knight's armour by his lady's hand was a mere caprice of romantic fashion. It is the type of an eternal truth—that the soul's armour is never well set to the heart unless a woman's hand has braced it; and it is only when she braces it loosely that the honour of manhood fails. Know you not those lovely lines — I would they were learned by all youthful ladies of England:—

> "Ah, wasteful woman, she who may
> On her sweet self set her own price,
> Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
> How has she cheapen'd Paradise;
> How given for nought her priceless gift,
> How spoiled the bread and spill'd the wine,
> Which, spent with due, respective thrift,
> Had made brutes men, and men divine!" *

* Coventry Patmore. You cannot read him too often or too carefully; as far as I know he is the only living poet who always strengthens and purifies; the others sometimes darken, and nearly always depress and discourage, the imagination they deeply seize.[1]

[1] [This note (except only the words "Coventry Patmore") was not in eds. 1–4. For an earlier allusion to Patmore's poem, see Vol. XV. p. 227. The passage here quoted is Prelude i. ("The Prodigal") to Canto vii. ("Ætna and The Moon") of book i. part i. of *The Angel in the House*. Patmore omitted "The Prodigal" in the last edition of the poem, substituting another prelude for it ("Love's Immortality"). In reading the passage, Ruskin altered the seventh line to "Which, granted all with sacred thrift": see his letter to Patmore given in the Introduction; above, p. liv.]

66. Thus much, then, respecting the relations of lovers I believe you will accept. But what we too often doubt is the fitness of the continuance of such a relation throughout the whole of human life. We think it right in the lover and mistress, not in the husband and wife. That is to say, we think that a reverent and tender duty is due to one whose affection we still doubt, and whose character we as yet do but partially and distantly discern; and that this reverence and duty are to be withdrawn when the affection has become wholly and limitlessly our own, and the character has been so sifted and tried that we fear not to entrust it with the happiness of our lives. Do you not see how ignoble this is, as well as how unreasonable? Do you not feel that marriage,—when it is marriage at all,—is only the seal which marks the vowed transition of temporary into untiring service, and of fitful into eternal love?

67. But how, you will ask, is the idea of this guiding function of the woman[1] reconcilable with a true wifely subjection? Simply in that it is a *guiding*, not a determining, function. Let me try to show you briefly how these powers seem to be rightly distinguishable.

We are foolish, and without excuse foolish, in speaking of the "superiority" of one sex to the other, as if they could be compared in similar things. Each has what the other has not: each completes the other, and is completed by the other: they are in nothing alike, and the happiness and perfection of both depends on each asking and receiving from the other what the other only can give.

68. Now their separate characters are briefly these. The man's power is active, progressive, defensive. He is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is for speculation and invention; his energy for adventure, for war, and for conquest, wherever war is just, wherever conquest necessary. But the woman's power

[1] [Compare *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 80, where Ruskin refers to this lecture on women's "power to do whatever they like with men"; and compare *ibid.*, Letter 90. See also *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 129 (below, p. 490).]

is for rule, not for battle,—and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision. She sees the qualities of things, their claims, and their places. Her great function is Praise; she enters into no contest, but infallibly adjudges the crown of contest. By her office, and place, she is protected from all danger and temptation, The man, in his rough work in open world, must encounter all peril and trial;—to him, therefore, must be the failure, the offence, the inevitable error: often he must be wounded, or subdued; often misled; and *always* hardened. But he guards the woman from all this; within his house, as ruled by her, unless she herself has sought it, need enter no danger, no temptation, no cause of error or offence. This is the true nature of home —it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home; so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently-minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land,[1] and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea;[2]—so far it vindicates the name, and fulfils the praise, of Home.

And wherever a true wife comes, this home is always round her. The stars only may be over her head; the glowworm in the night-cold grass may be the only fire at her foot; but home is yet wherever she is; and for a noble woman it stretches far round her, better than ceiled with

[1] [Isaiah xxxii. 2.]
[2] [Compare *Seven Lamps*, Vol. VIII. p. 98 and p. 99 *n.*]

cedar, or painted with vermilion,[1] shedding its quiet light far, for those who else were homeless.

69. This, then, I believe to be,—will you not admit it to be?—the woman's true place and power. But do not you see that, to fulfil this, she must—as far as one can use such terms of a human creature—be incapable of error? So far as she rules, all must be right, or nothing is. She must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise—wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service—the true changefulness of woman.[2] In that great sense—"La donna è mobile," not "Qual piúm' al vento";[3] no, nor yet "Variable as the shade, by the light quivering aspen made";[4] but variable as the *light*, manifold in fair and serene division, that it may take the colour of all that it falls upon, and exalt it.

70. (II.) I have been trying, thus far, to show you what should be the place, and what the power of woman. Now, secondly, we ask, What kind of education is to fit her for these?

And if you indeed think this a true conception of her office and dignity, it will not be difficult to trace the course of education which would fit her for the one, and raise her to the other.

The first of our duties to her—no thoughtful persons now doubt this,—is to secure for her such physical training and exercise as may confirm her health, and perfect her beauty; the highest refinement of that beauty being unattainable without splendour of activity and of delicate strength. To perfect her beauty, I say, and increase its power; it cannot be too powerful, nor shed its sacred light

[1] [Jeremiah xxii. 14.]
[2] [Compare *Ethics of the Dust*, § 88 (below, p. 311).]
[3] [The well-known song in Verdi's *Rigoletto*.]
[4] [*Marmion*, canto vi. 30.]

too far: only remember that all physical freedom is vain to produce beauty without a corresponding freedom of heart. There are two passages of that poet who is distinguished, it seems to me, from all others—not by power, but by exquisite *rightness*[1]—which point you to the source, and describe to you, in a few syllables, the completion of womanly beauty. I will read the introductory stanzas, but the last is the one I wish you specially to notice:—

"Three years she grew in sun and shower,
Then Nature said, 'A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

'Myself will to my darling be
Both law and impulse; and with me
The girl, in rock and plain,
In earth and heaven, in glade and bower,
Shall feel an overseeing power
To kindle, or restrain.

'The floating clouds their state shall lend
To her, for her the willow bend;
Nor shall she fail to see,
Even in the motions of the storm,
Grace that shall mould the maiden's form
By silent sympathy.

'And *vital feelings of delight*
Shall rear her form to stately height,—
Her virgin bosom swell.
Such thoughts to Lucy I will give,
While she and I together live,
Here in this happy dell.'"*

"*Vital* feelings of delight," observe. There are deadly feelings of delight; but the natural ones are vital, necessary to very life.

And they must be feelings of delight, if they are to be

* Observe, it is "Nature" who is speaking throughout, and who says, "while she and I together live."

[1] [On this appreciation of Wordsworth, compare *Fiction, Fair and Foul*, § 80.]

vital. Do not think you can make a girl lovely, if you do not make her happy. There is not one restraint you put on a good girl's nature—there is not one check you give to her instincts of affection or of effort—which will not be indelibly written on her features, with a hardness which is all the more painful because it takes away the brightness from the eyes of innocence, and the charm from the brow of virtue.

71. This for the means: now note the end. Take from the same poet, in two lines, a perfect description of womanly beauty—

"A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet."[1]

The perfect loveliness of a woman's countenance can only consist in that majestic peace, which is founded in the memory of happy and useful years,—full of sweet records; and from the joining of this with that yet more majestic childishness, which is still full of change and promise;—opening always—modest at once, and bright, with hope of better things to be won, and to be bestowed. There is no old age where there is still that promise.[2]

72. Thus, then, you have first to mould her physical frame, and then, as the strength she gains will permit you, to fill and temper her mind with all knowledge and thoughts which tend to confirm its natural instincts of justice, and refine its natural tact of love.

All such knowledge should be given her as may enable her to understand, and even to aid, the work of men: and yet it should be given, not as knowledge,—not as if it were, or could be, for her an object to know; but only to feel, and to judge. It is of no moment, as a matter of pride or perfectness in herself, whether she knows many languages or one; but it is of the utmost, that she should be able to show kindness to a stranger, and to understand the sweetness of a stranger's tongue. It is of no moment to her own

[1] [From the poem beginning "She was a phantom of delight."]
[2] [Eds. 1–4 add "—it is eternal youth."]

worth or dignity that she should be acquainted with this science or that; but it is of the highest that she should be trained in habits of accurate thought; that she should understand the meaning, the inevitableness, and the loveliness of natural laws; and follow at least some one path of scientific attainment, as far as to the threshold of that bitter Valley of Humiliation,[1] into which only the wisest and bravest of men can descend, owning themselves for ever children, gathering pebbles on a boundless shore.[2] It is of little consequence how many positions of cities she knows, or how many dates of events, or names of celebrated persons — it is not the object of education to turn the woman into a dictionary; but it is deeply necessary that she should be taught to enter with her whole personality into the history she reads; to picture the passages of it vitally in her own bright imagination; to apprehend, with her fine instincts, the pathetic circumstances and dramatic relations, which the historian too often only eclipses by his reasoning, and disconnects by his arrangement: it is for her to trace the hidden equities of divine reward, and catch sight, through the darkness, of the fateful threads of woven fire that connect error with retribution. But, chiefly of all, she is to be taught to extend the limits of her sympathy with respect to that history which is being for ever determined as the moments pass in which she draws her peaceful breath; and to the contemporary calamity, which, were it but rightly mourned by her, would recur no more hereafter. She is to exercise herself in imagining what would be the effects upon her mind and conduct, if she were daily brought into the presence of the suffering which is not the less real because shut from her sight. She is to be taught somewhat to understand the nothingness of the proportion which that little world in which she lives and loves, bears to the world in which God

[1] [Through which Christian had to pass in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*.]

[2] ["As children gathering pebbles on the shore": *Paradise Regained*, iv. 330. Hence Sir Isaac Newton's saying about himself that he was but as a child playing on the sea-shore, and amusing himself with pebble after pebble, and shell after shell, while the great ocean of truth stretched unfathomable away from him.]

lives and loves;[1]—and solemnly she is to be taught to strive that her thoughts of piety may not be feeble in proportion to the number they embrace, nor her prayer more languid than it is for the momentary relief from pain of her husband or her child, when it is uttered for the multitudes of those who have none to love them,—and is "for all who are desolate and oppressed."[2]

78. Thus far, I think, I have had your concurrence; perhaps you will not be with me in what I believe is most needful for me to say. There *is* one dangerous science for women—one which they must indeed beware how they profanely touch—that of theology. Strange, and miserably strange, that while they are modest enough to doubt their

[1] [See the last stanza of *In Memoriam*:—

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves."]

[2] [The Litany. In delivering the lecture Ruskin here gave an illustration from contemporary politics—thus reported in the *Manchester Examiner*:—

"He quoted from a recent newspaper account from Yalta the way in which thousands of Circassians were being driven from their country, with dreadful loss of life from suffering and exhaustion. This, he said, was all the fault of English men and women, but chiefly English ladies. If they cared about it and wept over it, it could not be. All this was because England did not carry out a treaty, the only good we ever got out of the siege of Sebastopol. The Circassian ambassadors went back from us a year ago without so much as being heard when they petitioned us merely to take our commerce to the south side of the Black Sea, and not let the Russians hinder us. If English ladies really cared, would it not be possible to hear at least a petition for justice if not to do it? That came upon him as he was thinking what a woman's feelings should be of the things far from her, if she would learn geography enough to know it does not make so much difference whether a man be wounded 3000 or 300 miles off—to him, it might to others—as the pity we ought to extend him. This, Mr. Ruskin said, was really much more important than any other part of his lecture."

The reference is to the long-drawn-out subjugation of the Caucasus by Russia; for another reference to it, see below, p. 548. The Treaty of Paris, at the end of the Crimean War, led to a temporary suspension of Russian activity in the Caucasus. But hostilities soon recommenced, and in 1864 the last of the tribes was subdued, and the final subjugation of the Circassians was secured by the wholesale emigration of the Circassians to the number of 400,000 souls; they settled, after many hardships, in different provinces of the Turkish Empire. By the Treaty of Paris the Black Sea was declared open to the mercantile marine of every nation; and the Circassian delegates hoped, if this clause of the treaty did not become a dead letter, to receive supplies from England. The sufferings of the exiles excited much futile sympathy in this country. In 1862 a committee had been formed for their relief; a public meeting was held in the City (with Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in the chair) on July 8, 1864; the subject was discussed in Parliament; and *Papers respecting the Settlement of Circassian Emigrants in Turkey* were presented, June 6, 1864.]

powers, and pause at the threshold of sciences where every step is demonstrable and sure, they will plunge headlong, and without one thought of incompetency, into that science in which the greatest men have trembled, and the wisest erred. Strange, that they will complacently and pridefully bind up whatever vice or folly there is in them, whatever arrogance, petulance, or blind incomprehensiveness, into one bitter bundle of consecrated myrrh. Strange, in creatures born to be Love visible, that where they can know least, they will condemn first, and think to recommend themselves to their Master, by crawling[1] up the steps of His judgment-throne to divide it with Him. Strangest of all that they should think they were led by the Spirit of the Comforter into habits of mind which have become in them the unmixed elements of home discomfort; and that they dare to turn the Household Gods of Christianity into ugly idols of their own;—spiritual dolls, for them to dress according to their caprice; and from which their husbands must turn away in grieved contempt, lest they should be shrieked at for breaking them.

74. I believe, then, with this exception, that a girl's education should be nearly, in its course and material of study, the same as a boy's; but quite differently directed. A woman, in any rank of life, ought to know whatever her husband is likely to know, but to know it in a different way. His command of it should be foundational and progressive; hers, general and accomplished for daily and helpful use. Not but that it would often be wiser in men to learn things in a womanly sort of way, for present use, and to seek for the discipline and training of their mental powers in such branches of study as will be afterwards fittest for social service; but, speaking broadly, a man ought to know any language or science he learns, thoroughly—while a woman ought to know the same language, or science, only so far as may enable her to sympathise in her husband's pleasures, and in those of his best friends.

[1] [In eds. 1–4 "scrambling."]

75. Yet, observe, with exquisite accuracy as far as she reaches. There is a wide difference between elementary knowledge and superficial knowledge—between a firm beginning, and an infirm attempt at compassing.[1] A woman may always help her husband by what she knows, however little; by what she half-knows, or mis-knows, she will only tease him.

And indeed, if there were to be any difference between a girl's education and a boy's, I should say that of the two the girl should be earlier led, as her intellect ripens faster, into deep and serious subjects: and that her range of literature should be, not more, but less frivolous; calculated to add the qualities of patience and seriousness to her natural poignancy of thought and quickness of wit; and also to keep her in a lofty and pure element of thought. I enter not now into any question of choice of books; only let us be sure that her books are not heaped up in her lap as they fall out of the package of the circulating library,[2] wet with the last and lightest spray of the fountain of folly.

76. Or even of the fountain of wit; for with respect to the sore temptation of novel reading, it is not the badness of a novel that we should dread, so much as its over-wrought interest. The weakest romance is not so stupefying as the lower forms of religious exciting literature, and the worst romance is not so corrupting as false history, false philosophy, or false political essays. But the best romance becomes dangerous, if, by its excitement, it renders the ordinary course of life uninteresting, and increases the morbid thirst for useless acquaintance with scenes in which we shall never be called upon to act.[3]

[1] [For "an infirm attempt at compassing," eds. 1–4 read "a feeble smattering." For other passages in which Ruskin insists on the importance of accuracy in education, see above, p. 64; Preface to *Aratra Pentelici*; and *Time and Tide*, § 98 (Vol. XVII. p. 399).]

[2] [Compare § 32 (above, p. 85).]

[3] [For other passages in which Ruskin discusses novels and novel-reading, see above, pp. 78–79 *n.*; *Time and Tide*, Appendix iii. (Vol. XVII. p. 468); *Elements of Drawing*, § 259 (Vol. XV. p. 227); *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 31, 34, 55 (footnote); and *Fiction, Fair and Foul*.]

77. I speak therefore of good novels only; and our modern literature is particularly rich in types of such. Well read, indeed, these books have serious use, being nothing less than treatises on moral anatomy and chemistry; studies of human nature in the elements of it. But I attach little weight to this function: they are hardly ever read with earnestness enough to permit them to fulfil it. The utmost they usually do is to enlarge somewhat the charity of a kind reader, or the bitterness of a malicious one; for each will gather, from the novel, food for her own disposition. Those who are naturally proud and envious will learn from Thackeray to despise humanity; those who are naturally gentle, to pity it; those who are naturally shallow, to laugh at it.[1] So, also, there might be a serviceable power in novels to bring before us, in vividness, a human truth which we had before dimly conceived; but the temptation to picturesqueness of statement is so great, that often the best writers of fiction cannot resist it; and our views are rendered so violent and one-sided, that their vitality is rather a harm than good.

78. Without, however, venturing here on any attempt at decision how much novel reading should be allowed, let me at least clearly assert this,—that whether novels, or poetry, or history be read, they should be chosen, not for their freedom from evil, but for their possession of good.[2] The chance and scattered evil that may here and there haunt, or hide itself in, a powerful book, never does any harm to a noble girl; but the emptiness of an author oppresses her, and his amiable folly degrades her. And if she can have access to a good library of old and classical books, there need be no choosing at all. Keep the modern magazine and novel out of your girl's way; turn her loose into

[1] [Ruskin's view of Thackeray's novels seems to have changed. With this passage may be compared *Modern Painters*, vol. iii. (Vol. V. pp. 213 *n.*, and 323); but for later, and less favourable, notices see *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 31 and 63; and *The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century*. With Thackeray himself, Ruskin was on friendly terms (see Vol. XVII. p. xxix. *n.*).]

[2] [Eds. 1–4 read ". . . not for what is out of them, but what is in them."]

the old library every wet day, and let her alone. She will find what is good for her; you cannot: for there is just this difference between the making of a girl's character and a boy's—you may chisel a boy into shape, as you would a rock, or hammer him into it, if he be of a better kind, as you would a piece of bronze. But you cannot hammer a girl into anything. She grows as a flower does,—she will wither without sun; she will decay in her sheath, as a narcissus will, if you do not give her air enough; she may fall, and defile her head in dust, if you leave her without help at some moments of her life; but you cannot fetter her; she must take her own fair form and way, if she take any, and in mind as in body, must have always

> "Her household motions light and free
> And steps of virgin liberty."[1]

Let her loose in the library, I say, as you do a fawn in a field. It knows the bad weeds twenty times better than you; and the good ones too, and will eat some bitter and prickly ones, good for it, which you had not the slightest thought would have been so.

79. Then, in art, keep the finest models before her, and let her practice in all accomplishments be accurate and thorough, so as to enable her to understand more than she accomplishes. I say the finest models—that is to say, the truest, simplest, usefullest. Note those epithets: they will range through all the arts. Try them in music, where you might think them the least applicable. I say the truest, that in which the notes most closely and faithfully express the meaning of the words, or the character of intended emotion; again, the simplest, that in which the meaning and melody are attained with the fewest and most significant notes possible; and, finally, the usefullest, that music which makes the best words most beautiful, which

[1] [Again a quotation from the poem beginning "She was a phantom of delight." Compare *Val d'Arno*, § 214, where the lines are again quoted to show Wordsworth's ideal in "the most soft and domestic form of virtue."]

enchants them in our memories each with its own glory of sound, and which applies them closest to the heart at the moment we need them.

80. And not only in the material and in the course, but yet more earnestly in the spirit of it, let a girl's education be as serious as a boy's. You bring up your girls as if they were meant for sideboard ornaments, and then complain of their frivolity. Give them the same advantages that you give their brothers—appeal to the same grand instincts of virtue in them; teach *them*, also, that courage and truth are the pillars of their being:—do you think that they would not answer that appeal, brave and true as they are even now, when you know that there is hardly a girls' school in this Christian kingdom where the children's courage or sincerity would be thought of half so much importance as their way of coming in at a door; and when the whole system of society, as respects the mode of establishing them in life, is one rotten plague of cowardice and imposture—cowardice, in not daring to let them live, or love, except as their neighbours choose; and imposture, in bringing, for the purposes of our own pride, the full glow of the world's worst vanity upon a girl's eyes, at the very period when the whole happiness of her future existence depends upon her remaining undazzled?

81. And give them, lastly, not only noble teachings, but noble teachers. You consider somewhat before you send your boy to school, what kind of a man the master is;—whatsoever kind of a man he is, you at least give him full authority over your son, and show some respect to him yourself;—if he comes to dine with you, you do not put him at a side table: you know also that, at college, your child's immediate tutor will be under the direction of some still higher tutor, for whom you have absolute reverence. You do not treat the Dean of Christ Church or the Master of Trinity as your inferiors.

But what teachers do you give your girls, and what reverence do you show to the teachers you have chosen?

Is a girl likely to think her own conduct, or her own intellect, of much importance, when you trust the entire formation of her character, moral and intellectual, to a person whom you let your servants treat with less respect than they do your housekeeper (as if the soul of your child were a less charge than jams and groceries), and whom you yourself think you confer an honour upon by letting her sometimes sit in the drawing-room in the evening?

82. Thus, then, of literature as her help, and thus of art. There is one more help which she cannot do without—one which, alone, has sometimes done more than all other influences besides,—the help of wild and fair nature. Hear this of the education of Joan of Arc:—

"The education of this poor girl was mean, according to the present standard; was ineffably grand, according to a purer philosophic standard; and only not good for our age, because for us it would be unattainable. * * *

"Next after her spiritual advantages, she owed most to the advantages of her situation. The fountain of Domrémy was on the brink of a boundless forest; and it was haunted to that degree by fairies, that the parish priest (*curé*) was obliged to read mass there once a year, in order to keep them in decent bounds. * * *

"But the forests of Domrémy—those were the glories of the land; for in them abode mysterious powers and ancient secrets that towered into tragic strength. 'Abbeys there were, and abbey windows,'—'like Moorish temples of the Hindoos,' that exercised even princely power both in Lorraine and in the German Diets. These had their sweet bells that pierced the forests for many a league at matins or vespers, and each its own dreamy legend. Few enough, and scattered enough, were these abbeys,[1] so as in no degree to disturb the deep solitude of the region; yet many enough to spread a network or awning of Christian sanctity over what else might have seemed a heathen wilderness." *

Now, you cannot, indeed, have here in England, woods eighteen miles deep to the centre; but you can, perhaps, keep a fairy or two for your children yet, if you wish to keep them. But *do* you wish it? Suppose you had each, at the back of your houses, a garden, large enough for your

* "Joan of Arc: in reference to M. Michelet's *History of France*." De Quincey's Works. Vol. iii. p. 217 [edition of 1862].

[1] [Compare *Val d'Arno*, § 82, where Ruskin refers to this passage.]

children to play in, with just as much lawn as would give them room to run,—no more—and that you could not change your abode; but that, if you chose, you could double your income, or quadruple it, by digging a coal shaft in the middle of the lawn, and turning the flower-beds into heaps of coke. Would you do it? I hope not. I can tell you, you would be wrong if you did, though it gave you income sixty-fold instead of four-fold.

88. Yet this is what you are doing with all England. The whole country is but a little garden, not more than enough for your children to run on the lawns of, if you would let them *all* run there. And this little garden you will turn into furnace ground, and fill with heaps of cinders, if you can;[1] and those children of yours, not you, will suffer for it. For the fairies will not be all banished; there are fairies of the furnace as of the wood, and their first gifts seem to be "sharp arrows of the mighty"; but their last gifts are "coals of juniper."[2]

84. And yet I cannot—though there is no part of my subject that I feel more—press this upon you; for we made so little use of the power of nature while we had it that we shall hardly feel what we have lost. Just on the other side of the Mersey you have your Snowdon, and your Menai Straits, and that mighty granite rock beyond the moors of Anglesea, splendid in its heathery crest, and foot planted in the deep sea, once thought of as sacred—a divine promontory, looking westward; the Holy Head or Headland, still not without awe when its red light glares first through storm.[3] These are the hills, and these the bays and blue inlets, which, among the Greeks, would

[1] [On this ideal for the future of England, compare *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 123 *n.* (below, p. 485); *Modern Painters*, vol. v. (Vol. VII. p. 425); *Queen of the Air*, § 92; and *Fors Clavigera*, Letter 12.]

[2] [Psalms cxx. 4.]

[3] [Ruskin stayed some days at Holyhead in 1862, and thus described the rocks in a letter to his father:—

"(*August* 25.)— . . . I have never seen more tremendous rock scenery even on the Montanvert. The sheets of gneiss and granite go down to the sea far more sheer than the granite of the Charmoz goes under the ice, and the gorse and heather are in blossom together, intermingled, a thing I have never seen before—purple and gold with a witness! The rocks are intensely interesting in substance as well as sublime in form—the sea pure and terrific—the distant range of Snowdon very grand."]

have been always loved, always fateful in influence on the national mind. That Snowdon is your Parnassus; but where are its Muses? That Holyhead mountain is your Island of Ægina; but where is its temple to Minerva?

85. Shall I read you what the Christian Minerva had achieved under the shadow of our Parnassus up to the year 1848?—Here is a little account of a Welsh school, from page 261 of the Report on Wales, published by the Committee of Council on Education. This is a school close to a town containing 5000 persons:—

"I then called up a larger class, most of whom had recently come to the school. Three girls repeatedly declared they had never heard of Christ, and two that they had never heard of God. Two out of six thought Christ was on earth now" (they might have had a worse thought perhaps), "three knew nothing about the Crucifixion. Four out of seven did not know the names of the months nor the number of days in a year. They had no notion of addition beyond two and two, or three and three; their minds were perfect blanks."[1]

Oh, ye women of England! from the Princess of that Wales to the simplest of you, do not think your own children can be brought into their true fold of rest, while these are scattered on the hills, as sheep having no shepherd.[2] And do not think your daughters can be trained to the truth of their own human beauty, while the pleasant places, which God made at once for their schoolroom and their playground, lie desolate and defiled. You cannot baptize them rightly in those inch-deep fonts of yours, unless you baptize them also in the sweet waters which the

[1] [The reference given in the text (in all editions) is wrong. The passage comes from *Reports of the Commissioners of Inquiry into the State of Education in Wales* (1846-1847), Part II. pp. 38 (where the instance is cited in the summary report), 133 (where the detailed report of it is given). Ruskin somewhat compresses the passage, and the words "(they might have had a worse thought perhaps)" are, of course, his comment. The school was near "Rhymnaur, in Brecknockshire, a town containing nearly 5000 persons employed at the neighbouring ironworks, etc., of Mr. Bailey, M.P., and left wholly without any mental or spiritual means of instruction by the Company."]

[2] [Matthew ix. 36.]

great Lawgiver[1] strikes forth for ever from the rocks of your native land—waters which a Pagan would have worshipped in their purity, and you worship only with pollution. You cannot lead your children faithfully to those narrow axe-hewn church altars of yours, while the dark azure altars in heaven—the mountains that sustain your island throne,—mountains on which a Pagan would have seen the powers of heaven rest in every wreathed cloud—remain for you without inscription; altars built, not to, but by an Unknown God.[2]

86. (III.) Thus far, then, of the nature, thus far of the teaching, of woman, and thus of her household office, and queenliness. We now come to our last, our widest question.—What is her queenly office with respect to the state?

Generally, we are under an impression that a man's duties are public, and a woman's private. But this is not altogether so. A man has a personal work or duty, relating to his own home, and a public work or duty, which is the expansion of the other, relating to the state. So a woman has a personal work or duty, relating to her own home, and a public work or duty, which is also the expansion of that.

Now the man's work for his own home is, as has been said,[3] to secure its maintenance, progress, and defence; the woman's to secure its order, comfort, and loveliness.

Expand both these functions. The man's duty as a member of a commonwealth, is to assist in the maintenance, in the advance, in the defence of the state. The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state.

What the man is at his own gate, defending it, if need be, against insult and spoil, that also, not in a less, but in

[1] [See Exodus xvii. 6.]
[2] [Acts xvii. 23.]
[3] [Above, § 60, pp. 121–122.]

a more devoted measure, he is to be at the gate of his country, leaving his home, if need be, even to the spoiler, to do his more incumbent work there.

And, in like manner, what the woman is to be within her gates, as the centre of order, the balm of distress, and the mirror of beauty: that she is also to be without her gates, where order is more difficult, distress more imminent, loveliness more rare.

And as within the human heart there is always set an instinct for all its real duties,—an instinct which you cannot quench, but only warp and corrupt if you withdraw it from its true purpose:—as there is the intense instinct of love, which, rightly disciplined, maintains all the sanctities of life, and, misdirected, undermines them; and *must* do either the one or the other;—so there is in the human heart an inextinguishable instinct, the love of power, which, rightly directed, maintains all the majesty of law and life, and, misdirected, wrecks them.

87. Deep rooted in the innermost life of the heart of man, and of the heart of woman, God set it there, and God keeps it there.—Vainly, as falsely, you blame or rebuke the desire of power!—For Heaven's sake, and for Man's sake, desire it all you can. But *what* power? That is all the question. Power to destroy? the lion's limb, and the dragon's breath? Not so. Power to heal, to redeem, to guide, and to guard. Power of the sceptre and shield; the power of the royal hand that heals in touching,—that binds the fiend, and looses the captive; the throne that is founded on the rock of Justice, and descended from only by steps of Mercy. Will you not covet such power as this, and seek such throne as this, and be no more housewives, but queens?

88. It is now long since the women of England arrogated, universally, a title which once belonged to nobility only; and, having once been in the habit of accepting the simple title of gentlewoman as correspondent to that of gentleman, insisted on the privilege of assuming the title

of "Lady,"* which properly corresponds only to the title of "Lord."

I do not blame them for this; but only for their narrow motive in this. I would have them desire and claim the title of Lady, provided they claim, not merely the title, but the office and duty signified by it. Lady means "bread-giver" or "loaf-giver," and Lord means "maintainer of laws,"[1] and both titles have reference, not to the law which is maintained in the house, nor to the bread which is given to the household; but to law maintained for the multitude, and to bread broken among the multitude. So that a Lord has legal claim only to his title in so far as he is the maintainer of the justice of the Lord of lords; and a Lady has legal claim to her title only so far as she communicates that help to the poor representatives of her Master, which women once, ministering to Him of their substance, were permitted to extend to that Master Himself; and when she is known, as He Himself once was, in breaking of bread.[2]

89. And this beneficent and legal dominion, this power of the Dominus, or House-Lord, and of the Domina, or House-Lady, is great and venerable, not in the number of those through whom it has lineally descended, but in the number of those whom it grasps within its sway; it is always regarded with reverent worship wherever its dynasty

* I wish there were a true order of chivalry instituted for our English youth of certain ranks, in which both boy and girl should receive, at a given age, their knighthood and ladyhood by true title; attainable only by certain probation and trial both of character and accomplishment; and to be forfeited, on conviction, by their peers, of any dishonourable act. Such an institution would be entirely, and with all noble results, possible, in a nation which loved honour. That it would not be possible among us, is not to the discredit of the scheme.

[1] [According to Skeat (*Etymological Dictionary*) *lord* means "loaf-keeper (Anglo-Saxon *hlâford* (loaf-ward)," and lady, "loaf-kneader (Anglo-Saxon *hlâf* and *dæge* (kneader)." Ruskin, it will be seen, assumes a different derivation for "lord," deriving it from the Anglo-Saxon *lâgu* (law). For other references to "ladies" as "loaf-givers," see *Ethics of the Dust*, § 78 (below, p. 298); and *Fors Clavigera*, Letters 45 and 93; and for lords as "law-wards," *Time and Tide*, § 153 (Vol. XVII. p. 440).]

[2] [Luke xxiv. 30, 31, 35.]

is founded on its duty, and its ambition co-relative with its beneficence. Your fancy is pleased with the thought of being noble ladies, with a train of vassals. Be it so; you cannot be too noble, and your train cannot be too great; but see to it that your train is of vassals whom you serve and feed, not merely of slaves who serve and feed *you*; and that the multitude which obeys you is of those whom you have comforted, not oppressed,—whom you have redeemed, not led into captivity.

90. And this, which is true of the lower or household dominion, is equally true of the queenly dominion; that highest dignity is open to you, if you will also accept that highest duty. Rex et Regina—Roi et Reine—"*Right-doers*";[1] they differ but from the Lady and Lord, in that their power is supreme over the mind as over the person—that they not only feed and clothe, but direct and teach. And whether consciously or not, you must be, in many a heart, enthroned: there is no putting by that crown; queens you must always be: queens to your lovers; queens to your husbands and your sons; queens of higher mystery to the world beyond, which bows itself, and will for ever bow, before the myrtle crown[2] and the stainless sceptre of womanhood. But, alas! you are too often idle and careless queens, grasping at majesty in the least things, while you abdicate it in the greatest; and leaving misrule and violence to work their will among men, in defiance of the power which, holding straight in gift from the Prince of all Peace, the wicked among you betray, and the good forget.

91. "Prince of Peace."[3] Note that name. When kings rule in that name, and nobles, and the judges of the earth, they also, in their narrow place, and mortal measure, receive the power of it. There are no other rulers than they; other rule than theirs is but *mis*rule; they who govern

[1] [Compare *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 109 (below, p. 476); and *Unto this Last*, § 44 *n.*, and *Munera Pulveris*, § 113 (Vol. XVII. pp. 59, 239).]

[2] [For the myrtle as sacred to Venus, see Virgil, *Eclogues*, vii. 61.]

[3] [Isaiah ix. 6.]

verily "Dei Gratiâ"[1] are all princes, yes, or princesses of Peace. There is not a war in the world, no, nor an injustice, but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered. Men, by their nature, are prone to fight; they will fight for any cause, or for none. It is for you to choose their cause for them, and to forbid them when there is no cause. There is no suffering, no injustice, no misery, in the earth, but the guilt of it lies with you. Men can bear the sight of it, but you should not be able to bear it. Men may tread it down without sympathy in their own struggle; but men are feeble in sympathy, and contracted in hope; it is you only who can feel the depths of pain, and conceive the way of its healing. Instead of trying to do this, you turn away from it; you shut yourselves within your park walls and garden gates; and you are content to know that there is beyond them a whole world in wilderness—a world of secrets which you dare not penetrate; and of suffering which you dare not conceive.

92. I tell you that this is to me quite the most amazing among the phenomena of humanity. I am surprised at no depths to which, when once warped from its honour, that humanity can be degraded. I do not wonder at the miser's death, with his hands, as they relax, dropping gold. I do not wonder at the sensualist's life, with the shroud wrapped about his feet. I do not wonder at the single-handed murder of a single victim, done by the assassin in the darkness of the railway, or reed shadow of the marsh. I do not even wonder at the myriad-handed murder of multitudes, done boastfully in the daylight, by the frenzy of nations, and the immeasurable, unimaginable guilt heaped up from hell to heaven, of their priests, and kings. But this is wonderful to me—oh, how wonderful!—to see the tender and delicate woman among you, with her child at her breast, and a power, if she would wield it, over it, and over its father, purer than the air of heaven, and stronger than

[1] [Compare *Crown of Wild Olive*, § 145 (below, p. 502), and *Munera Pulveris*, § 100 *n.* (Vol. XVII. p. 225).]

the seas of earth—nay, a magnitude of blessing which her husband would not part with for all that earth itself, though it were made of one entire and perfect chrysolite:[1]—to see her abdicate this majesty to play at precedence with her next-door neighbour! This is wonderful—oh, wonderful!—to see her, with every innocent feeling fresh within her, go out in the morning into her garden to play with the fringes of its guarded flowers, and lift their heads when they are drooping, with her happy smile upon her face, and no cloud upon her brow, because there is a little wall around her place of peace: and yet she knows, in her heart, if she would only look for its knowledge, that, outside of that little rose-covered wall, the wild grass, to the horizon, is torn up by the agony of men, and beat level by the drift of their life-blood.

93. Have you ever considered what a deep under meaning there lies, or at least may be read, if we choose, in our custom of strewing flowers before those whom we think most happy? Do you suppose it is merely to deceive them into the hope that happiness is always to fall thus in showers at their feet?—that wherever they pass they will tread on herbs of sweet scent, and that the rough ground will be made smooth for them by depths of roses? So surely as they believe that, they will have, instead, to walk on bitter herbs and thorns; and the only softness to their feet will be of snow. But it is not thus intended they should believe; there is a better meaning in that old custom. The path of a good woman is indeed strewn with flowers; but they rise behind her steps, not before them. "Her feet have touched the meadows, and left the daisies rosy."[2]

[1] [*Othello*, v. 2, 146:—

"Had she been true,
If Heaven would make me such another world,
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite,
I'd not have sold her for it."]

[2] [Tennyson: *Maud*, i. xii. 6. Ruskin, it will be seen, treats the passage as "a lover's fancy, false and vain"; as an instance, that is, of the "Pathetic Fallacy" (see *Modern Painters*, vol. iii., Vol. V. p. 219). The poet resented this interpretation.

94. You think that only a lover's fancy;—false and vain! How if it could be true? You think this also, perhaps, only a poet's fancy—

> "Even the light harebell raised its head
> Elastic from her airy tread."[1]

But it is little to say of a woman, that she only does not destroy where she passes. She should revive; the harebells should bloom, not stoop, as she passes. You think I am rushing into wild hyperbole! Pardon me, not a whit—I mean what I say in calm English, spoken in resolute truth. You have heard it said—(and I believe there is more than fancy even in that saying, but let it pass for a fanciful one)—that flowers only flourish rightly in the garden of some one who loves them. I know you would like that to be true; you would think it a pleasant magic if you could flush your flowers into brighter bloom by a kind look upon them: nay, more, if your look had the power, not only to cheer, but to guard;—if you could bid the black blight turn away, and the knotted caterpillar spare—if you could bid the dew fall upon them in the drought, and say to the south wind, in frost—"Come, thou south, and breathe upon my garden, that the spices of it may flow out."[2] This you would think a great thing? And do you think it not a greater thing, that all this, (and how much more than this!) you *can* do, for fairer flowers than these—flowers that could bless you for having blessed them, and will love you for having loved them; flowers that have thoughts like yours, and lives like yours; and which, once saved, you save for ever? Is this only a little power? Far among the moorlands and the rocks,—far in the darkness of the terrible streets,—these feeble florets are lying, with all their fresh leaves torn, and their stems

"Why," he said to Thomas Wilson, "the very day I wrote it, I saw the daisies rosy in Maiden's Croft, and thought of enclosing one to Ruskin labelled 'Apathetic fallacy'" (*Memoir*, by his son, vol. i. p. 511).]

[1] [From Scott's description of Ellen Douglas: *Lady of the Lake*, i. 18. "Light" is "slight" in the original.]

[2] [Song of Solomon iv. 16.]

broken: will you never go down to them, nor set them in order in their little fragrant beds, nor fence them in their trembling, from the fierce wind? Shall morning follow morning, for you, but not for them; and the dawn rise to watch, far away, those frantic Dances of Death;* but no dawn rise to breathe upon these living banks of wild violet, and woodbine, and rose; nor call to you, through your casement—call (not giving you the name of the English poet's lady, but the name of Dante's great Matilda, who, on the edge of happy Lethe, stood, wreathing flowers with flowers[1]), saying:—

> "Come into the garden, Maud,
> For the black bat, night, has flown,
> And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
> And the musk of the roses blown"?[2]

Will you not go down among them?—among those sweet living things, whose new courage, sprung from the earth with the deep colour of heaven upon it, is starting up in strength of goodly spire; and whose purity, washed from the dust, is opening, bud by bud, into the flower of promise;—and still they turn to you, and for you, "The Larkspur listens—I hear, I hear! And the Lily whispers—I wait."[3]

95. Did you notice that I missed two lines when I read you that first stanza; and think that I had forgotten them? Hear them now:—

> "Come into the garden, Maud,
> For the black bat, night, has flown,
> Come into the garden, Maud,
> I am here at the gate, alone."

Who is it, think you, who stands at the gate of this sweeter garden alone, waiting for you? Did you ever hear,

* See note, p. 93.

[1] [See *Modern Painters*, iii. (Vol. V. pp. 276–277), where Ruskin quotes, and comments upon, the passage from *Purgatorio*, xxviii.]

[2] [*Maud*, part i. canto xxii. verse 1 (the first two and the last two lines).]

[3] [From verse 10 of the same canto.]

not of a Maud, but a Madeleine, who went down to her garden in the dawn, and found One waiting at the gate, whom she supposed to be the gardener?[1] Have you not sought Him often;—sought Him in vain, all through the night;—sought Him in vain at the gate of that old garden where the fiery sword is set? He is never there; but at the gate of *this* garden He is waiting always—waiting to take your hand—ready to go down to see the fruits of the valley, to see whether the vine has flourished, and the pomegranate budded. There you shall see with Him the little tendrils of the vines that His hand is guiding—there you shall see the pomegranate springing where His hand cast the sanguine seed;—more: you shall see the troops of the angel keepers that, with their wings, wave away the hungry birds from the path-sides where He has sown, and call to each other between the vineyard rows, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines, for our vines have tender grapes." Oh—you queens—you queens! among the hills and happy greenwood of this land of yours, shall the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; and in your cities, shall the stones cry out against you, that they are the only pillows where the Son of Man can lay His head?

[1] [John xx. 15. The other Biblical references are to Genesis iii. 24; Song of Solomon vii. 12, and ii. 15; Matthew viii. 20.]

LECTURE III

THE MYSTERY OF LIFE AND ITS ARTS

Lecture delivered in the theatre of the Royal College of Science, Dublin, 1868[1]

96. When I accepted the privilege of addressing you today, I was not aware of a restriction with respect to the topics of discussion which may be brought before this Society*—a restriction which, though entirely wise and right under the circumstances contemplated in its introduction, would necessarily have disabled me, thinking as I think, from preparing any lecture for you on the subject of art in a form which might be permanently useful. Pardon me, therefore, in so far as I must transgress such limitation; for indeed my infringement will be of the letter—not of the spirit—of your commands. In whatever I may say touching the religion which has been the foundation of art, or the policy which has contributed to its power, if I offend one, I shall offend all; for I shall take no note of any separations in creeds, or antagonisms in parties: neither do I fear that ultimately I shall offend any, by proving—or at least stating as capable of positive proof—the connection of all that is best in the crafts and arts of man, with the simplicity of his faith, and the sincerity of his patriotism.

97. But I speak to you under another disadvantage, by which I am checked in frankness of utterance, not here only, but everywhere: namely, that I am never fully aware how far my audiences are disposed to give me credit for

* That no reference should be made to religious questions.

[1] [Intended for delivery there, but actually delivered in another building: see Introduction (above, p. lviii.). The "Society" was a Committee for organising afternoon lectures.]

Poetry — poetic	Prose Prosaic	Drama
Ballads	a) fiction ← historical novel / short story / romance / domestic	comedy
Epic	b) Non-fiction	tragedy
Lyric	educational / informational / didactic	Satire
Sonnet		Melodrama / Serial drama.
Romance		
Satire		

Victoria reigned 1837 - 1901

Courting Patmore

Spiritual journey philosophy

written in 1854-55

about his courtship and final love

a long poem. ↓ woman's virtue.

Muse - figure of inspiration (circle)

violet - faithfulness, modesty

lilac - first emotions of love, youthful innocence

rose - love hope.

white - innocence, reverence, peace

blue - peace, trust, tranquility

1.) Angel in the House

Sec I The Betrothal

Sec II - The Espousal

2.) Victories of Love → Faithful forever

Victories of love

1 Prologue - why write poem

↓ setting up narrative thread

12 cantos - each opens by quoting Felix Vaughan's Sonnet / Prelude →

3 sisters → honoria Churchills.

mary* mildred

↓

Felix meets these 3 total [illegible] mentions [illegible] interests by [illegible]

- Power - affirmative, positive, negative how is it portrayed (Ruskin & Patmore)
- honoria purity of image - what does that mean
- [illegible] words that have significant meanings.
- Role of Servants / think about class.

The Angel in the House[1]

BOOK I

THE PROLOGUE

"Mine is no horse with wings, to gain
The region of the spheral chime;
He does but drag a rumbling wain,
Cheer'd by the silver bells of rhyme;
And if at Fame's bewitching note
My homely Pegasus[2] pricks an ear,
The world's cart-collar hugs his throat,
And he's too wise to kick or rear."

Thus ever answer'd Vaughan his wife,
Who, more than he, desired his fame;
But, in his heart, his thoughts were rife
How for her sake to earn a name.
With bays poetic three times crown'd,
And other college honours won,
He, if he chose, might be renown'd,
He had but little doubt, she none;
And in a loftier phrase he talk'd
With her, upon their Wedding-Day,
(The eighth), while through the fields they walk'd,
Their children shouting by the way.

"Not careless of the gift of song,
Nor out of love with noble fame,
Meditating much and long
What I should sing, how win a name,
Considering well what theme unsung,
What reason worth the cost of rhyme,
Refrains to loose the poet's tongue

In these last days, the dregs of time,
Learn that to me, though born so late,
There does, beyond desert, befall
(May my great fortune make me great!)
The first of themes sung last of all.
In green and undiscover'd ground,
Yet near where many others sing,
I have the very well-head found
Whence gushes the Pierian Spring."[3]

Then she: "What is it, Dear? The Life
Of Arthur, or Jerusalem's Fall?"
"Neither: your gentle self, my wife,
And love, that grows from one to all.
And if I faithfully proclaim
Of these the exceeding worthiness,
Surely the sweetest wreath of Fame
Shall, to your hope, my brows caress;
And if, by virtue of my choice
Of this, the most heart-touching theme
That ever tuned a poet's voice,
I live, as I am bold to dream,
To be delight to future days,
And into silence only cease
When those are still, who shared their bays
With Laura and with Beatrice.[4]
Imagine, Dear, how learned men
Will deep-conceived devices find,
Beyond my purpose and my ken,
An ancient bard of simple mind!
You, Sweet, his Mistress, Wife, and Muse,
Were you for mortal woman meant?
Your praises give a hundred clues
To mythological intent!
And, severing thus the truth from trope,
In you the Commentators see,

[1] We are printing the text of the last separately printed edition, published by Harrap in 1923, containing the final versions of Books I and II.

[2] Greek mythology, the winged horse ridden by Bellerophon. When Pegasus struck Mt. Helicon, the home of the Muses, began to rise up into heaven, Pegasus kicked it, thus releasing the inspirational river Hippocrene.

[3] Pieria was reputedly the home of the Muses; to drink of the Pierian spring is to be poetically inspired.

[4] the women who inspired the love poetry of Petrarch and Dante, respectively.

Some Faith, some Charity, some Hope,
Some, wiser, think you all the three."
She laugh'd. How proud she always was
To see how proud he was of her!
But he had grown distraught, because
The Muse's mood began to stir.

The Cathedral Close

PRELUDE

Love's Reality

I walk, I trust, with open eyes;
I've travell'd half my worldly course;
And in the way behind me lies
Much vanity and some remorse;
I've lived to feel how pride may part
Spirits, tho' match'd like hand and glove;
I've blush'd for love's abode, the heart;
But have not disbelieved in love;
Nor unto love, sole mortal thing
Of worth immortal, done the wrong
To count it, with the rest that sing,
Unworthy of a serious song;
And love is my reward; for now,
When most of dead'ning time complain,
The myrtle blooms upon my brow,
Its odour quickens all my brain.

Love's Immortality

How vilely 'twere to misdeserve
The poet's gift of perfect speech,
In song to try, with trembling nerve,
The limit of its utmost reach,
Only to sound the wretched praise
Of what to-morrow shall not be,
So mocking with immortal bays
The cross-bones of mortality!
I do not thus. My faith is fast
That all the loveliness I sing
Is made to bear the mortal blast,
And blossom in a better Spring.

The Poet's Humility

From love's abysmal ether rare
If I to men have here made known
New truths, they, like new stars, were there.
But only not yet written down.
Nor verse, nor art, nor plot, nor plan,
Nor aught of mine here's worth a toy:
Quit praise and blame, and, if you can,
Do, brother, for the nonce, enjoy.
Moving but as the feelings move,
I run, or loiter with delight,
Or stop to mark where gentle Love
Persuades the soul from height to height.
Yet, know, that, though my words are gay
As David's dance, which Michael scorn'd,
If rightly you peruse the Lay,
You shall be sweetly help'd and warn'd.

The Impossibility

Of all the impossibilities
Of love's achieving, surely none
So hopeless as to speak it is.
By love, in me, may this be done!
Lo, love's obey'd by all. 'Tis right
That all should know what they obey;
Lest erring conscience damp delight,
And folly laugh our joys away.
Thou Primal Love, who grantest wings
And voices to the woodland birds,
Grant me the power of saying things
Too simple and too sweet for words!

Heaven and Earth

How long shall men deny the flower
Because its roots are in the earth,

And crave with tears from God the dower
They have, and have despised as dearth.

The Cathedral Close

Once more I came to Sarum Close
With joy half memory, half desire,
And breathed the sunny wind that rose
And blew the shadows o'er the Spire,
And toss'd the lilac's scented plumes,
And sway'd the chestnut's thousand cones,
And fill'd my nostrils with perfumes,
And shaped the clouds in waifs and zones,
And wafted down the serious strain
Of Sarum bells, when, true to time,
I reach'd the Dean's, with heart and brain
That trembled to the trembling chime.

'Twas half my home six years ago.
The six years had not alter'd it:
Red-brick and ashlar, long and low,
With dormers and with oriels lit.
Geranium, lychnis, rose array'd
The windows, all wide open thrown;
And some one in the Study play'd
The Wedding-March of Mendelssohn.[1]
And there it was I last took leave:
'Twas Christmas: I remember'd now
The cruel girls, who feign'd to grieve,
Took down the evergreens; and how
The laurel into blazes woke
The fire, lighting the large, low room,
A dim, rich lustre of old oak
And crimson velvet's glowing gloom.

No change had touch'd Dean Churchill: kind,
By widowhood more than winters bent,
And settled in a cheerful mind,
And still forecasting heaven's content.

Well might his thoughts be fixed on high,
Now she was there! Within her face
Humility and dignity
Were met in a most sweet embrace.
She seem'd expressly sent below
To teach our erring minds to see
The rhythmic change of time's swift flow
As part of still eternity.
Her life, all honour, observed, with awe
Which cross experience could not mar,
The fiction of the Christian law
That all men honourable are;
And so her smile at once conferr'd
High flattery and benign reproof;
And I, a rude boy, strangely stirr'd,
Grew courtly in my own behoof.

Was this her eldest, Honor; prude,
Who would not let me pull the swing;
Who, kiss'd at Christmas, called me rude,
And sobb'd alone, and would not sing?
How changed! In shape no slender Grace,[2]
But Venus;[3] milder than the dove;
Her mother's air; her Norman face;
Her large sweet eyes, clear lakes of love.
Mary I knew. In former time
Ailing and pale, she thought that bliss
Was only for a better clime,
And, heavenly overmuch, scorn'd this.
I, rash with theories of the right,
Which stretch'd the tether of my Creed,
But did not break it, held delight
Half discipline. We disagreed.
She told the Dean I wanted grace.
Now she was kindest of the three,
And two wild roses deck'd her face.

[1] Mendelssohn (1809–47), German composer.

[2] alluding to the three Graces, sister-goddesses who bestowed beauty and charm. Their names were Aglaia, Thalia, and Euphrosyne.

[3] the Roman goddess of beauty and sensual love; perhaps also the statue Venus de Medici in the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

And, what, was this my Mildred, she
To herself and all a sweet surprise?
My Pet, who romp'd and roll'd a hoop?
I wonder'd where those daisy eyes
Had found their touching curve and droop.
Unmannerly times! But now we sat
Stranger than strangers; till I caught
And answer'd Mildred's smile; and that
Spread to the rest, and freedom brought.
By Honor I was kindly task'd
To explain my never coming down
From Cambridge; Mary smiled and ask'd
Were Kant and Goethe[1] yet outgrown?
And, pleased, we talk'd the old days o'er;
And, parting, I for pleasure sigh'd.
To be there as a friend, (since more!)
Seem'd then, seems still, excuse for pride;
For something that abode endued
With temple-like repose, an air
Of life's kind purposes pursued
With order'd freedom sweet and fair.

Mary and Mildred

PRELUDE

The Paragon

When I behold the skies aloft
Passing the pageantry of dreams,
The cloud whose bosom, cygnet-soft,
A couch for nuptial Juno[2] seems,
The ocean broad, the mountains bright,
The shadowy vales with feeding herds,
I from my lyre the music smite,
Nor want for justly matching words.
All powers of the sea and air,
All interests of hill and plain,
I so can sing, in seasons fair,
That who hath felt may feel again;
Nay more, the gracious Muses bless
At times my tongue until I can,
With moving emphasis, express
The likeness of the perfect man.
Elated oft by such free songs,
I think with utterance free to raise
That hymn for which the whole world longs,
A worthy hymn in woman's praise;
A hymn bright-noted like a bird's,
Arousing these song-sleepy times
With rhapsodies of perfect words,
Ruled by returning kiss of rhymes.
But when I look on her and hope
To tell with joy what I admire,
My thoughts lie cramp'd in narrow scope,
Or in the feeble birth expire;
No skill'd complexity of speech,
No simple phrase of tenderest fall,
No liken'd excellence can reach
Her, the most excellent of all,
The best half of creation's best,
Its heart to feel, its eye to see,
The crown and complex of the rest,
Its aim and its epitome.
Nay, might I utter my conceit,
'Twere after all a vulgar song,
For she's so simply, subtly sweet
My deepest rapture does her wrong.
Yet it is now my chosen task

[1] Immanuel Kant (1724–1804); German professor of logic and metaphysics, his influential works include the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) lived and worked in Weimar; in 1791 he was appointed director of the Weimar court theatre. Author of many influential works including *Faust* (1832), *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), and *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (1795–96). The latter two works were translated by Thomas Carlyle, who introduced Goethe's thought to English intellectuals. The speaker here has been reading (studying) philosophy at Cambridge University.

[2] the queen of heaven, wife and sister of Jupiter; she presided over marriage and of women.

To sing her worth as Maid and Wife;
Nor happier post than this I ask,
To live her laureate all my life.
On wings of love uplifted free,
And by her gentleness made great,
I'll teach how noble man should be
To match her with such a lovely mate;
And then in her will move the more
The woman's wish to be desired,
(By praise increased,) till both shall soar,
With blissful emulations fired.
And, as geranium, pink, or rose
Is thrice itself through power of art,
So may my happy skill disclose
New fairness even in her fair heart;
Until that churl shall nowhere be,
Who bends not, awed, before the throne
Of her affecting majesty,
So meek, so far unlike our own;
Until, (for who may hope too much
From her who wields the powers of love?)
Our lifted lives at last shall touch
That happy goal to which they move;
Until, we find, as darkness rolls
Away, and evil mist dissolve,
That nuptial contrasts are the poles
On which the heavenly spheres revolve.

MARY AND MILDRED

One morning, after Church, I walk'd
Alone with Mary on the Lawn,
And felt myself, howe'er we talked,
To grave themes delicately drawn.
When she, delighted, found I knew
More of her peace than she supposed,
Our confidences heavenwards grew,
Like fox-glove buds, in pairs disclosed
Our former faults did we confess,
Our ancient feud was more than heal'd,
And with the woman's eagerness
For amity full-sign'd and seal'd,
She, offering up for sacrifice
Her heart's reserve, brought out to show
Some verses, made when she was ice
To all but Heaven, six years ago;
Since happier grown! I took and read
The neat-writ lines. She, void of guile,
Too late repenting, blush'd and said,
I must not think about the style.

. . . . . .

She from a rose-tree shook the blight;
And well she knew that I knew well
Her grace with silence to requite.

Honoria

PRELUDE

The Lover

He meets, by heavenly chance express,
The destined maid; some hidden hand
Unveils to him that loveliness
Which others cannot understand.
No songs of love, no summer dreams
Did e'er his longing fancy fire
With vision like to this; she seems
In all things better than desire!
His merits in her presence grow,
To match the promise in her eyes,
And round her happy footsteps blow
The authentic airs of Paradise.
For joy of her he cannot sleep;
Her beauty haunts him all the night.
It melts his heart, it makes him weep
For wonder, worship, and delight.

No smallest boon were bought too dear,
Though barter'd for his love-sick life;
Yet trusts he, with undaunted cheer,

To vanquish heaven and call her wife.
He notes how queens of sweetness still
Neglect their crowns, and stoop to mate;
How, self-consign'd with lavish will,
They ask but love proportionate;
How swift pursuit by small degrees,
Love's tactic, works like miracle;
How valour, clothed in courtesies,
Brings down the haughtiest citadel;
And therefore, though he merits not
To kiss the braid upon her skirt,
His hope, discouraged ne'er a jot,
Out-soars all possible desert.

The Attainment

You love? That's high as you shall go
For 'tis as true as Gospel text,[1]
Not noble then is never so,
Either in this world or the next.

Honoria

She was all mildness; yet 'twas writ
Upon her beauty legibly,
"He that's for heaven itself unfit,
Let him not hope to merit me."

If question were of her for wife,
Ill might be mended, hope increased.
Not that I soar'd so far above
Myself, as this great hope to dare;
And yet I well foresaw that love
Might hope where reason must despair;
And, half-resenting the sweet pride
Which would not ask me to admire,
"Oh," to my secret heart I sigh'd,
"That I were worthy to desire!"

[1] specifically, the lives of Christ told by the Evangelists in the New Testament, but the phrase also refers to the entire Christian message.

The Morning Call

PRELUDE

The Rose of the World

Lo, when the Lord made North and South
And sun and moon ordained, He,
Forthbringing each by word of mouth
In order of its dignity,
Did man from the crude clay express
By sequence, and, all else decreed,
He form'd the woman; nor might less
Than Sabbath such a work succeed.
And still with favour singled out,
Marr'd less than man by mortal fall,
Her disposition is devout,
Her countenance angelical;
The best things that the best believe
Are in her face so kindly writ
The faithless, seeing her, conceive,
Not only heaven, but hope of it;
No idle thought her instinct shrouds,
But fancy chequers settled sense,
Like alteration of the clouds
On noonday's azure permanence;
Pure dignity, composure, ease,
Declare affections nobly fix'd,
And impulse sprung from due degrees
Of sense and spirit sweetly mix'd;
Her modesty, her chiefest grace,
The cestus[2] clasping Venus's side,
Is potent to deject the face
Of him who would affront its pride;
Wrong dares not in her presence speak,
Nor spotted thought its taint disclose
Under the protest of a cheek
Outbragging Nature's boast the rose.
In mind and manners how discreet!

[2] a belt or girdle, particularly that worn by a bride in ancient

How artless in her very art;
How candid in discourse; how sweet
The concord of her lips and heart;
How simple and how circumspect;
How subtle and how fancy-free;
Though sacred to her love, how deck'd
With unexclusive courtesy;
How quick in talk to see from far
The way to vanquish or evade;
How able her persuasions are
To prove, her reasons to persuade;
How, (not to call true instinct's bent
And woman's very nature, harm,)
How amiable and innocent
Her pleasure in her power to charm;
How humbly careful to attract,
Though crown'd with all the soul desires,
Connubial aptitude exact,
Diversity that never tires.

The Tribute

Boon Nature to the woman bows.
She walks in all its glory clad,
And, chief herself of earthly shows,
Each other helps her, and is glad,
No splendour 'neath the sky's proud dome
But serves for her familiar wear;
The far-fetched diamond finds its home
Flashing and smouldering in her hair;
For her the seas their pearls reveal;
Art and strange lands her pomp supply
With purple, chrome, and cochineal,
Ochre, and lapis lazuli;
The worm its golden woof presents;
Whatever runs, flies, dives, or delves,
All doff for her their ornaments,
Which suit her better than themselves;
And all, by this their power to give,
Proving her right to take, proclaim
Her beauty's clear prerogative
To profit so by Eden's blame.

Compensation

That nothing here may want its praise,
Know, she who in her dress reveals
A fine and modest taste, displays
More loveliness than she conceals.

THE MORNING CALL

"Full many a lady has ere now
My apprehensive fancy fired,
And woven may a transient chain;
But never lady like to this,
Who holds me as the weather-vane
Is held by yonder clematis.
She seems the life of nature's powers;
Her beauty is the genial thought
Which makes the sunshine bright; the flowers,
But for hint of her, were nought."
A voice, the sweeter for the grace
Of suddenness, while thus I dream'd,
"Good morning!" said or sang. Her face
The mirror of the morning seem'd.
Her sisters in the garden walk'd,
And would I come? Across the Hall
She took me; and we laugh'd and talk'd
About the Flower-show and the Ball.
The sweet hour lapsed, and left my breast
A load of joy and tender care;
And this delight, which life oppress'd,
To fix'd aims grew, that ask'd for pray'r.

I went, and closed and lock'd the door,
And cast myself down on my bed,
And there, with many a blissful tear,
I vow'd to love and pray'd to wed
The maiden who grown so dear;
Thank'd God who had set her in my path;

And promised, as I hoped to win,
I never would sully my faith
By the least selfishness or sin.

The Violets

PRELUDE

The Parallel

I know not how to her it seems,
Or how to a perfect judging eye,
But, as my loving thought esteems,
Man misdeserves his sweet ally.
Where she succeeds with cloudless brow,
In common and in holy course,
He fails, in spite of prayer and vow
And agonies of faith and force;
Or, if his suit with Heaven prevails
To righteous life, his virtuous deeds
Lack beauty, virtue's badge; she fails
More graciously than he succeeds.
Her spirit, compact of gentleness,
If Heaven postpones or grants her prayer,
Conceives no pride in its success,
And in its failure no despair.

Prospective Faith

They safely walk in darkest ways
Whose youth is lighted from above,
Where, through the senses' silvery haze,
Dawns the veil'd moon of nuptial love.
Who is the happy husband? He
Who, scanning his unwedded life,
Thanks Heaven, with a conscience free,
'Twas faithful to his future wife.

THE VIOLETS

I went not to the Dean's unbid,
For I'd not have my mystery,
From her so delicately hid,
Discuss'd by gossips at their tea.
A long, long week, and not once there,
Had made my spirit sick and faint,
And lack-love, foul as love is fair,
Perverted all things to complaint.
How vain the world had grown to be!
How mean all people and their ways,
How ignorant their sympathy,
And how impertinent their praise;
To my necessity how strange
The sunshine and the song of birds;
How dull the clouds' continual change,
How foolishly content the herds;
How unaccountable the law
Which bade me sit in blindness here,
While she, the sun by which I saw,
Shed splendour in an idle sphere!
And then I kiss'd her stolen glove,
And sigh'd to reckon and define
The modes of martyrdom in love,
And how far each one might be mine.
Wretched were life, if the end were now!
But this gives tears to dry despair,
Faith shall be blest, we know not how,
And love fulfill'd, we know not where.

While thus I grieved, and kiss'd her glove,
My man brought in her note to say
Papa had bid her send his love,
And would I dine with them next day?
They had learn'd and practised Purcell's glee[1]
To sing it by to-morrow night.
The Postscript was: Her sisters and she
Inclosed some violets, blue and white;
She and her sisters found them where
I wager'd once no violets grew;

[1] Henry Purcell (1659–95), English composer and organist at Westminster Abbey.

So they had won the gloves. And there
The violets lay, two white, one blue.

The Dean

PRELUDE

Perfect Love rare

Most rare is still most noble found,
Most noble still most incomplete;
Sad law, which leaves King Love uncrown'd
In this obscure, terrestrial seat!
With bale more sweet than others' bliss,
And bliss more wise than others' bale,
The secrets of the world are his,
And freedom without let or pale.

Love Justified

This little germ of nuptial love,
Which springs so simply from the sod,
The root is, as my song shall prove,
Of all our love to man and God.

Love Serviceable

What measure Fate to him shall mete
Is not the noble Lover's care;
He's heart-sick with a longing sweet
To make her happy as she's fair.
And, holding life as so much pelf
To buy her posies, learns this lore:
He does not rightly love himself
Who does not love another more.

Love a Virtue

Strong passions mean weak will, and he
Who truly knows the strength and bliss
Which are in love, will own with me
No passion but a virtue 'tis.
Ice-cold strikes heaven's noble glow
To spirits whose vital heat is hell;
And to corrupt hearts even so
The songs I sing, the tale I tell.
These cannot see the robes of white
In which I sing of love. Alack,
But darkness shows in heavenly light,
Though whiteness, in the dark, is black!

THE DEAN

The Ladies rose. I held the door,
And sigh'd, as her departing grace
Assured me that she alway wore
A heart as happy as her face;

Towards my mark the Dean's talk set:
He praised my "Notes on Abury,"
Read when the Association met
At Sarum; he was glad to see
I had not stopp'd, as some men had,
At Wrangler[1] and Prize Poet; last,
He hoped the business was not bad
I came about: then the wine pass'd.

A full glass prefaced my reply:
I loved his daughter, Honor; he knew
My estate and prospects; might I try
To win her? To mine eyes tears flew.
He thought 'twas that. I might. He gave
His true consent, if I could get
Her love. A dear, good Girl! she'd have
Only three thousand pounds as yet;
More bye and bye. Yes, his good will
Should go with me; he would not stir;
He and my father in old time still
Wish'd I should one day marry her;

[1] at Cambridge University, a student who has achieved the highest standing in the mathematical tripos (a series of examinations).

That, though his blessing and his prayer
Had help'd, should help, my suit, yet he
Left all to me, his passive share
Consent and opportunity.
My chance, he hoped, was good: I'd won
Some name already; friends and place
Appear'd within my reach, but none
Her mind and manners would not grace.

Ætna and the Moon[1]

PRELUDE

The Prodigal

To heroism and holiness
How hard it is for man to soar
But how much harder to be less
Than what his mistress loves him for!
There is no man so full of pride,
And none so intimate with shame,
And none to manhood so denied,
As not to mend if women blame.
He does with ease what do he must,
Or merit this, and nought's debarr'd
From man, when woman shall be just
In yielding her desired regard.
Ah wasteful woman, she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
How has she cheapen'd paradise;
How given for nought her priceless gift,
How spoil'd the bread and spill'd the wine,
Which, spent with due, respective thrift,
Had made brutes men, and men divine.

The Metamorphosis

Maid, choosing man, remember this:
You take his nature with his name.
Ask, too, what his religion is,
For you will soon be of the same.

ÆTNA AND THE MOON

To ease my heart, I feigning, seized
A pen, and, showering tears, declared
My unfeign'd passion; sadly pleased
Only to dream that so I dared.
Thus was the fervid truth confess'd,
But wild with paradox ran the plea,
As wilfully in hope depress'd,
Yet bold beyond hope's warranty:

"O, more than dear, be more than just,
And do not deafly shut the door!
I claim no right to speak; I trust
Mercy, not right; yet who has more?
Your name pronounced brings to my heart
A feeling like the violet's breath,
Which does so much of heaven impart
It makes me yearn with tears for death;
The winds that in the garden toss
The Guelder-roses give me pain,
Alarm me with the dread of loss,
Exhaust me with the dream of gain;
I'm troubled by the clouds that move;
Thrill'd by the breath which I respire;
And ever, like a torch, my love,
Thus agitated, flames the higher;
All's hard that has not you for goal;
I scarce can move my hand to write;
For love engages all my soul,
And leaves the body void of might;
The wings of will spread idly as do
The bird's that in a vacuum lies;
My breast, asleep with dreams of you,
Forgets to breathe, and bursts in sighs;
I see no rest this side the grave,
No rest or hope from you apart;
Your life is in the rose you gave;

[1] Aetna, or Etna, in Sicily, is the highest active volcano in Europe.

Its perfume suffocates my heart;
There's no refreshment in the breeze;
The heaven o'erwhelms me with its blue;
I faint beside the dancing seas;
Winds, skies, and waves are only you;
The thought or act which not intends
You service, seems a sin and shame;
In that one only object ends
Conscience, religion, honour, fame.
Yet think not, Dear, that, thus engaged,
These drop their heavenly function; no,
They simply bow where Heaven's presaged
In semblance of the liveliest show.
Ah, could I put off love! Could we
Never have met! What calm, what ease
Nay, but, alas, this remedy
Were ten times worse than the disease;
For when, indifferent, I pursue
The world's best pleasures for relief,
My heart, still sickening back to you,
Finds none like memory of its grief;
And, though 'twere very hell to hear
You felt such misery as I,
All good, save you, were far less dear
Than is that ill with which I die!
Where er I go, wandering forlorn,
You are the world's love, life and glee:
O wretchedness not to be borne
If she that's Love should not love me!"

I could not write another word,
Through pity for my own distress;
And forth I went, untimely stirr'd
To make my misery more or less.
I went, beneath the heated noon,
To where, in her simplicity,
She sat at work; and, as the Moon
On Ætna smiles, she smiled on me;
But, now and then, in cheek and eyes,
I saw, or fancied, such a glow
As when, in summer-evening skies,
Some say "It lightens," some say "No."

Sarum Plain[1]

PRELUDE

The Revelation

An idle poet, here and there,
Looks round him, but, for all the rest,
The world, unfathomably fair,
Is duller than a witling's jest.
Love wakes men, once a life-time each;
They life their heavy lids, and look;
And, lo, what one sweet page can teach
They read with joy, then shut the book.
And some give thanks, and some blaspheme,
And most forget; but, either way,
That and the Child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day.

The Spirit's Epochs

Not in the crises of events,
Of compass'd hopes, or fears fulfill'd,
Or acts of gravest consequence,
Are life's delight and depth reveal'd.
I drew my bride, beneath the moon,
Across my threshold; happy hour!
But, ah, the walk that afternoon
We saw the water-flags in flower!

The Prototype

Lo, there, whence love, life, light are pour'd,
Veil'd with impenetrable rays,
Amidst the presence of the Lord

[1] Salisbury Plain; the location of Stonehenge, a prehistoric circle of massive stones at one time thought to have been built by the Druids.

Co-equal Wisdom laughs and plays.
Female and male God made the man;
His image is the whole, not half;
And in our love we dimly scan
The love which is between Himself.

SARUM PLAIN

Brief worship done, which still endows
The day with beauty not its own;
Breakfast enjoy'd, 'mid hush of boughs
And perfumes thro' the windows blown;
With intervening pause, that paints
Each act with honour, life with calm,
(As old processions of the Saints
At every step have wands of palm),
We rose; the ladies went to dress,
And soon return'd with smiles; and then,
Plans fix'd, to which the Dean said Yes,
Once more we drove to Salisbury Plain.
We past my house, (observed with praise
By Mildred, Mary acquiesced),
And left the old and lazy greys
Below the hill, and walk'd the rest.
The moods of love are like the wind,
And none knows whence or why they rise,
I ne'er before felt heart and mind
So much affected through mine eyes.
How cognate with the flatter'd air,
How form'd for earth's familiar zone,
She moved; how feeling and how fair
For others' pleasure and her own;
And, ah, the heaven of her face!
How, when she laugh'd, I seem'd to see
The gladness of the primal grace,
And how, when grave, its dignity!
Of all she was, the least not less
Delighted the devoted eye;
No fold or fashion of her dress
Her fairness did not sanctify;
Better it seem'd as now to walk,
And humbly by her gentle side
Observe her smile and hear her talk,
Then call the world's next best my bride.

By the great stones we chose our ground
For shade; and there, in converse sweet,
Took luncheon. On a little mound
Sat the three ladies; at their feet,
I sat; and smelt the heathy smell,
Pluck'd hare-bells, turn'd the telescope
To the country round. My life went well,
For once, without the wheels of hope;
And I despised the Druid rocks
That scowled their chill gloom from above,
Like churls whose stolid wisdom mocks
The lightness of immortal love.
And, as we talk'd, my spirit quaff'd
The sparkling winds; the candid skies
At our untruthful strangeness laugh'd;
I kill'd with mine her smiling eyes;
And sweet familiarness and awe
Prevail'd that hour on either part.

Sahara

PRELUDE

The Wife's Tragedy

Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself.
How often flings for nought! and yokes
Her heart to an icicle or whim,
Whose each impatient word provokes
Another, not from her, but him;
While she, too gentle even to force
His penitence by kind replies,
Waits by, expecting his remorse;

With pardon in her pitying eyes;
And if he once, by shame oppress'd,
A comfortable word confers,
She leans and weeps against his breast,
And seems to think the sin was hers;
And whilst his love has any life,
Or any eye to see her charms,
At any time, she's still his wife,
Dearly devoted to his arms;
She loves with love that cannot tire;
And when, ah woe, she loves alone,
Through passionate duty love flames higher,
As grass grows taller round a stone.

Common Graces

O man, (and Legion is thy name,)
Who hadst for dowry with thy wife
A conduct void of outward blame,
The beauty of a loyal life,
Is nature in thee too spiritless,
Ignoble, impotent, and dead,
To prize her love and loveliness
The more for being thy daily bread?
And art thou one of that vile crew
Which see no splendour in the sun,
Praising alone the good that's new,
Or over, or not yet begun?
And has it dawn'd on thy dull wits
That love warms many as soft a nest,
That, though swathed round with benefits,
Thou art not singularly blest?
And hast thy thanks for gifts divine,
The common food of many a heart,
Because they are not only thine?
Beware lest in the end thou art
Cast as a goat forth from the fold,
Too proud to feel the common grace
Of tussiful myriads who behold
Forevermore the Father's face.

SAHARA

I stood by Honor and the Dean,
They seated in the London train.
A month from her! yet this had been,
Ere now, without such bitter pain.
But neighbourhood makes parting light,
And distance remedy has none;
Alone, she near, I felt as might
A blind man sitting in the sun;
She near, all for the time was well;
Hope's self, when we were far apart,
With lonely feeling, like the smell
Of heath on mountains, fill'd my heart.

The bell rang, and, with shrieks like death,
Link catching link, the long array,
With ponderous pulse and fiery breath,
Proud of its burthen, swept away;
And through the lingering crowd I broke,
Sought the hill-side, and thence, heart-sick,
Beheld, far off, the little smoke
Along the landscape kindling quick.
Life without her was vain and gross,
The glory from the world was gone,
And on the gardens of the Close
As on Sahara shone the sun.

Going to Church

I woke at three; for I was bid
To breakfast with the Dean at nine,
And thence to Church. My curtain slid,
I found the dawning Sunday fine.

My prayers for her being done, I took
Occasion by the quiet hour
To find and know, by Rule and Book,
The rights of love's beloved power.

My giddiest hope allow'd
No selfish thought, or earthly smirch;
And forth I went, in peace, and proud
To take my passion into Church.
I found them, with exactest grace
And fresh as Spring, for Spring attired;
And by the radiance in her face
I saw she felt she was admired;
And, through the common luck of love,
A moment's fortunate delay,
To fit the little lilac glove,
Gave me her arm; and I and they,
(They true to this and every hour,
As if attended on by Time),
Went into Church while yet the tower
Was noisy with the finish'd chime.

Her soft voice, singularly heard
Beside me, in the Psalms, withstood
The roar of voices, like a bird
Sole warbling in a windy wood;
And, when we knelt, she seem'd to be
An angel teaching me to pray;
And all through the high Liturgy
My spirit rejoiced without allay.

The Dance

PRELUDE

The Daughter of Eve

The woman's gentle mood o'er-stept
Withers my love, that lightly scans
The rest, and does in her accept
All her own faults, but none of man's.

As man I cannot judge her ill,
Or honour her fair station less,
Who with a woman's errors, still
Preserves a woman's gentleness.

Aurea Dicta

Child, would you shun the vulgar doom,
In love disgust, in death despair?
Know, death must come and love must come
And so for each your soul prepare.

Lest sacred love your soul ensnare,
With pious fancy still infer
"How loving and how lovely fair
Must he be who has fashioned her!"

Love's perfect blossom only blows
Where noble manners veil defect.
Angels may be familiar; those
Who err each other must respect.

Love blabb'd of is a great decline;
A careless word unsanctions sense;
But he who casts Heaven's truth to swine
Consummates all incontinence.

THE DANCE

"My memory of heaven awakes!
She's not of the earth, although her light
As lantern'd by her body, makes
A piece of it past bearing bright.
So innocently proud and fair
She is, that Wisdom sings for glee
And Folly dies, breathing one air
With such a bright-cheek'd chastity.
And though her charms are a strong law
Compelling all men to admire,
They go so clad with lovely awe
None but the noble dares desire."

This learn'd I, watching where she danced
Native to melody and light,
And now and then toward me glanced
Pleased, as I hoped, to please my sight.

I love to speak was impotent,
Till music did a tongue confer,
And I ne'er knew what music meant,
Until I danced to it with her.
Press'd her hand, by will or chance
I know not, but I saw the rays
Withdrawn, which did till then enhance
Her fairness with its thanks for praise.
I knew my spirit's vague offence
Was patent to the dreaming eye
And heavenly tact of innocence,
And did for fear my fear defy,
And ask'd her for the next dance.
"Yes."

I saw she saw; and, O sweet Heaven,
Could my glad mind have credited
That influence had to me been given
To affect her so, I should have said
That, though she from herself conceal'd
Love's felt delight and fancied harm,
They made her face the jousting field
Of joy and beautiful alarm.

The Abdication

From little signs, like little stars,
Whose faint impression on the sense
The very looking straight at mars,
Or only seen by confluence;
From instinct of a mutual thought,
Whence sanctity of manners flow'd;
From chance unconscious, and from what
Concealment, overconscious, show'd;
Her hand's less weight upon my arm,
Her lowlier mien; that match'd with this;
I found, and felt with strange alarm,
I stood committed to my bliss.

I grew assur'd, before I ask'd,
That she'd be mine without reserve,
And in her unclaim'd graces bask'd,
At leisure, till the time should serve,
With just enough of dread to thrill
The hope, and make it trebly dear;
Thus loth to speak the word to kill
Either the hope or happy fear.
Till once, through lanes returning late,
Her laughing sisters lagg'd behind;
And, ere we reach'd her father's gate,
We paused with one presentient mind;
And, in the dim and perfumed mist,
Their coming stay'd, who, friends to me,
And very women, loved to assist
Love's timid opportunity.

Twice rose, twice died my trembling word;
The faint and frail Cathedral chimes
Spake time in music, and we heard
The chafers rustling in the limes.
Her dress, that touch'd me where I stood,
The warmth of her confided arm,
Her bosom's gentle neighbourhood,
Her pleasure in her power to charm;
Her look, her love, her form, her touch,
The least seem'd most by blissful turn,
Blissful but that it pleased too much,
And taught the wayward soul to yearn.
It was as if a harp with wires
Was traversed by the breath I drew;
And, oh, sweet meeting of desires,
She, answering, own'd that she loved too.

Honoria was to be my bride!
The hopeless heights of hope were scaled;
The summit won, I paused and sigh'd,
As if success itself had fail'd.
It seem'd as if my lips approach'd
To touch at Tantalus'[1] reward,

[1] the son of Zeus and a nymph. As punishment for divulging the secrets of the gods, he was submerged up to the chin in a river; water and fruit moved away from him whenever he attempted to eat or drink.

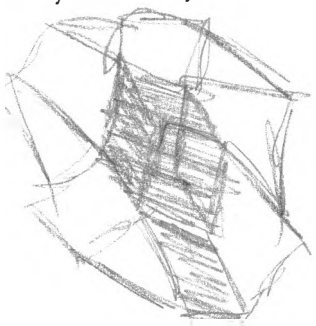
And rashly on Eden life encroach'd,
Half-blinded by the flaming sword.
The whole world's wealthiest and its best,
So fiercely sought, appear'd, when found,
Poor in its need to be possess'd,
Poor from its very want of bound.
By that consenting scared and shock'd,
Such change came o'er her mien and mood
That I felt startled and half-mock'd,
As winning what I had not woo'd.

My queen was crouching at my side,
By love unscepter'd and brought low,
Her awful garb of maiden pride
All melted into tears like snow;
The mistress of my reverent thought,
Whose praise was all I ask'd of fame,
In my close-watch'd approval sought
Protection as from danger and blame;
Her soul, which late I loved to invest
With pity for my poor desert,
Buried its face within my breast,
Like a pet fawn by hunters hurt.

Book II

Accepted

What fortune did my heart foretell?
What shook my spirit, as I woke,
Like the vibration of a bell
Of which I had not heard the stroke?
Was it some happy vision shut
From memory by the sun's fresh ray?
Was it that linnet's song; or but
A natural gratitude for day?
Or the mere joy the senses weave,
A wayward ecstasy of life?



Then I remember'd, yester-eve
I won Honoria for my wife.

The Course of True Love

Prelude

The Changed Allegiance

Watch how a bird, that captived sings,
The cage set open, first looks out,
Yet fears the freedom of his wings,
And now withdraws, and flits about,
The maiden so, from love's free sky
In chaste and prudent counsels caged,
But longing to be loosen'd by
Her suitor's faith declared and gaged,
When blest with that release desired,
First doubts if truly she is free,
Then pauses, restlessly retired,
Alarm'd at too much liberty;
But after that, habitual faith,
Divorced from self, where late 'twas due,
Walks nobly in its novel path,
And she's to changed allegiance true;
And, prizing what she can't prevent,
(Right wisdom, often misdeem'd whim,)
Her will's indomitably bent
On mere submissiveness to him;
To him she'll cleave, for him forsake
Father's and mother's fond command!
He is her lord, for he can take
Hold of her faint heart with his hand.

The Course of True Love

Oh, beating heart of sweet alarm,
Which stays the lover's step when near
His mistress and her awful charm,
Of grace and innocence sincere!

I held the half-shut door and heard
  The voice of my betrothed wife,
Who sang my verses, every word
  By music taught its latent life.

. . . .

"Go, Child, and see him out yourself,"
  The Dean said, after tea, "and shew
The place, upon that upper shelf,
  Where Tasso[1] stands, lent long ago."

A rose in ruin, from her breast,
  Fell, as I took a fond adieu,
"Those rose-leaves to my heart be press'd,
  Honoria, while it aches for you!"
"You must go now, Love!" "See, the air
  Is thick with starlight!" "Let me tie
This scarf on. Oh, your Tasso! There!
  I'm coming, Aunt!" "Sweet, Sweet!" "Good-bye!"
With love's bright arrows from her eyes,
  And balm on her permissive lips,
She pass'd, and night was a surprise,
  As when the sun at Quito[2] dips.

The County Ball

PRELUDE

Love Ceremonious

Keep your undrest, familiar style
  For strangers, but respect your friend,
Her most, whose matrimonial smile
  Is and asks honour without end.
This found, and needs it must so be,
  That life from love's allegiance flags,
When love forgets his majesty
  In sloth's unceremonious rags.
Let love make home a gracious Court;
  There let the world's rude, hasty ways
Be fashion'd to a loftier port,
  And learn to bow and stand at gaze;
And let the sweet, respective sphere
  Of personal worship there obtain
Circumference for moving clear,
  None treading on another's train.
This makes that pleasures do not cloy,
  And dignifies our mortal strife
With calmness and considerate joy,
  Befitting our immortal life.

The County Ball

Well, Heaven be thank'd my first-love fail'd,
  And, Heaven be thank'd, our first-loves do!
Thought I, when Fanny past me sail'd,
  Loved once, for what I never knew.

But there danced she, who from the leaven
  Of ill preserved my heart and wit
All unawares, for she was heaven,
  Others at best but fit for it.
One of those lovely things she was
  In whose least action there can be
Nothing so transient but it has
  An air of immortality.
Her motion, feeling 'twas beloved,
  The pensive soul of tune express'd,
And, oh, what perfume, as she moved,
  Came from the flowers in her breast!
Ah, none but I discern'd her looks,
  When in the throng she pass'd me by,
For love is like a ghost, and brooks
  Only the chosen seer's eye.
Whilst so her beauty fed my sight,
  And whilst I lived in what she said,

[1] Torquato Tasso (1544–95), Italian poet.

[2] city in north central Ecuador, high in the Andes mountains; a noted Roman Catholic centre.

Accordant airs, like all delight
Most sweet when noted least, were play'd;
I held my breath, and thought "how bright!"
That guileless beauty in its noon,
Compelling tribute of desires
Ardent as day when Sirius[1] reigns,
Pure as the permeating fires
That smoulder in the opal's veins.

The Koh-i-Noor [2]

PRELUDE

Love Thinking

What lifts her in my thoughts so far
Beyond all else? Let Love not err!
'Tis that which all right women are,
But which I'll know in none but her.
She is to me the only Ark[3]
Of that high mystery which locks
The lips of joy, or speaks in dark
Enigmas and in paradox;
That potent charm, which none can fly,
Nor would, which makes me bond and free,
Nor can I tell it first 'twas I
Chose it, or it elected me.

THE KOH-I-NOOR

"Be man's hard virtues highly wrought,
But let my gentle Mistress be,
In every look, word, deed, and thought,
Nothing but sweet and womanly!
Her virtues please my virtuous mood,
But what at all times I admire
Is, not that she is wise or good,
But just the thing which I desire.
With versatility to bring
Her mental tone to any strain,
If oft'nest she is anything,
Be it thoughtless, talkative, and vain.
That seems in her supremest grace
Which, virtue or not, apprises me
That my familiar thoughts embrace
Unfathomable mystery."

I answer'd thus; for she desired
To know what mind I most approved
Partly to learn what she inquired,
Partly to get the praise she loved.
I praised her, but no praise could fill
The depths of her desire to please,
Though dull to others as a Will
To them that have no legacies.
The more I praised the more she shone,
Her eyes incredulously bright,
And all her happy beauty blown
Beneath the beams of my delight.
Sweet rivalry was thus begot;
By turns, my speech, in passion's style
With flatteries the truth o'ershot,
And she surpass'd them with her smile.

"Dear Felix!" "Sweet, sweet Love!" But then
Was Aunt Maude's noisy ring and knock
"Stay, Felix; you have caught my hair.
Stoop! Thank you!" "May I have that light
"Not now. Good morning, Aunt!" "Why, Fe
"You look magnificent to-day."
"Here's Felix, Aunt." "Fox and green goose
Who handsome gets should handsome
"Aunt, you are friends!" "Ah, to be sure!
Good morning! Go on flattering, Sir,
A woman's like the Koh-i-noor,
Worth just the price that's put on her.

[1] the Dog-Star, thought to be scorchingly hot.

[2] a famous diamond presented to Queen Victoria in 1849; reputed to bring bad luck to its possessor.

[3] the Ark of the Covenant.

The Epitaph

PRELUDE

The Last Night at Home

Oh, Muse, who dost to me reveal
  The mystery of the woman's life,
Relate how 'tis a maid might feel,
  The night before she's crown'd a wife!
Lo, sleepless in her little bed,
  She lies and counts the hours till noon.
Ere this, to-morrow, she'll be wed
  Ere this? Alas, how strangely soon!
A fearful blank of ignorance
  Lies manifest across her way,
And shadows, cast from unknown chance,
  Make sad and dim the coming day.
Her faithless dread she now discards,
  And now remorseful memory flings
Its glory round the last regards
  Of home and all accustom'd things.
Her father's voice, her mother's eyes
  Accuse her treason; 'tis in vain
She thinks herself a wife, and tries
  To comprehend the greater gain;
The unknown fortune nothing cheers
  Her loving heart's familiar loss,
And torrents of repentant tears
  Their hot and smarting threshold cross.
When first within her bosom Love
  Took birth, and beat his blissful wings,
It seem'd to lift her mind above
  All care for other earthly things;
But, oh, too lightly did she vow
  To leave for aye her happy nest;
And dreadful is the thought that now
  Assaults her weak and shaken breast:
Ah, should her lover's love abate;
  Ah, should she, miserable, lose
All dear regards of maiden state,
  Dissolved by time and marriage dues!
And so her fears increase, till fear
  O'erfilms her apprehensive eye
That she may swoon, with no one near,
  And haply so, unmarried, die.
With instinct of her ignorance,
  (The virgin's strength and veiled guide,)
She prays, and casts the reins of chance
  To Love, nor recks what shall betide.

. . . .

The gentle wife, who decks his board
  And makes his day to have no night,
Whose wishes wait upon her lord,
  Who finds her own in his delight,
Is she another now than she
  Who, mistress of her maiden charms,
At his wild prayer, incredibly
  Committed them to his proud arms?
Unless her choice of him's a slur
  Which makes her proper credit dim,
He never enough can honour her
  Who past all speech has honour'd him.

The Foreign Land

A woman is a foreign land,
  Of which, though there he settle young
A man will ne'er quite understand
  The customs, politics, and tongue.
The foolish hie them post-haste through,
  See fashions odd, and prospects fair,
Learn of the language, "How-d'ye do,"
  And go and brag that they've been there.
The most for leave to trade apply,
  For once, at Empire's seat her heart,
Then get what knowledge ear and eye
  Glean chancewise in the life-long mart.
And certain others few and fit,
  Attach them to the Court, and see
The Country's best, its accent hit,
  And partly sound its polity.

The Epitaph

"At Church in twelve hours more, we meet!
This Dearest, is our last farewell."
"Oh, Felix, do you love me?" "Sweet,
Why do you ask?" "I cannot tell."

And was it no vain fantasy
That raised me from the earth with pride?
Should I to-morrow verily
Be Bridegroom, and Honoria Bride?
Should I, in simple fact, henceforth
Live unconditionally lord
Of her whose smile for brightest worth
Seem'd all too bountiful reward?
If now to part with her could make
Her pleasure greater, sorrow less,
I for my epitaph would take
"To serve seem'd more than to possess."
And I perceived, (the vision sweet
Dimming with happy dew mine eyes,)
That love and joy are torches lit
From altar-fires of sacrifice.

Across the sky the daylight crept,
And birds grew garrulous in the grove,
And on my marriage-morn I slept
A soft sleep, undisturb'd by love.

The Wedding

PRELUDE

Constancy rewarded

I vow'd unvarying faith, and she,
To whom in full I pay that vow,
Rewards me with variety
Which men who change can never know.

THE WEDDING

Life smitten with a feverish chill,
The brain too tired to understand,
In apathy of heart and will,
I took the woman from the hand
Of him who stood for God, and heard
Of Christ, and of the Church his Brid
The Feast, by presence of the Lord
And his first Wonder, beautified;
The mystic sense to Christian men;
The bonds in innocency made,
And gravely to be enter'd then
For children, godliness, and aid,
And honour'd, and kept free from smirch
And how a man must love his wife
No less than Christ did love his Church,
If need be, giving her his life;
And, vowing then the mutual vow,
The tongue spake, but intention slept.
'Tis well for us Heaven asks not how
This oath is sworn, but how 'tis kept.

O, bold seal of a bashful bond,
Which makes the marriage-day to be
To those before it and beyond,
An ice-berg in an Indian sea!

"Now, while she's changing," said the Dea
"Her bridal for her travelling dress,
I'll preach allegiance to your queen!
Preaching's the trade which I profess.
And one more minute's mine! You know
I've paid my girl a father's debt,
And this last charge is all I owe.
She's yours; but I love more than yet
You can; such fondness only wakes
When time has raised the heart above
The prejudice of youth, which makes
Beauty conditional to love.
Prepare to meet the weak alarms

Of novel nearness; recollect
The eye which magnifies her charms
Is microscopic for defect.
Fear comes at first; but soon, rejoiced,
You'll find your strong and tender loves
Like holy rocks by Druids poised,
The least force shakes, but none removes.
Although you smile, there's much to mend!
Yet never girl, I think, had less.
Her worst point is, she's apt to spend
Too much on alms-deeds and on dress.
Her strength is your esteem; beware
Of finding fault; her will's unnerv'd
By blame; from you 'twould be despair;
But praise that is not quite deserv'd
Will all her noble nature move
To make your utmost wishes true.
Yet think, while mending thus your Love,
Of matching her ideal too!
The death of nuptial joy is sloth:
To keep you mistress in your wife,
Keep to the very height your oath,
And honour her with arduous life.
Lastly, no personal reverence doff.
Life's all externals unto those
Who pluck the blushing petals off,
To find the secret of the rose.—
How long she's staying! Green's Hotel
I'm sure you'll like. The charge is fair,
The wines good. I remember well
I stopp'd once, with her mother, there.
A tender conscience of her vow
That mother had! She is so like her!"
But Mrs. Fife, much flurried, now
Whisper'd, "Miss Honor's ready, Sir."

Husband and Wife

PRELUDE

The Married Lover

Why, having won her, do I woo?
Because her spirit's vestal grace
Provokes me always to pursue,
But, spirit-like, eludes embrace;
Because her womanhood is such
That, as on court-days subjects kiss
The Queen's hand, yet so near a touch
Affirms no mean familiarness,
Because although in act and word
As lowly as a wife can be,
Her manners, when they call me Lord,
Remind me 'tis by courtesy;
Because, though free of the outer court
I am, this Temple keeps its shrine
Sacred to Heaven; because, in short,
She's not and never shall be mine.

HUSBAND AND WIFE

As souls, ambitious, but low-born,
If raised past hope by luck or wit,
All pride of place will proudly scorn,
And live as they'd been used to it,
So we two wore our strange estate;
Familiar, unaffected, free,
We talk'd, until the dusk grew late,
Of this and that; but, after tea,
As doubtful if a lot so sweet
As ours was ours in very sooth,
Like children, to promote conceit,
We feign'd that it was not the truth;
And she assumed the maiden coy,
And I adored remorseless charms,
And then we clapp'd our hands for joy
And ran into each other's arms.

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The Epilogue

"Ah, dearest wife, a fresh-lit fire
  Sends forth to heaven great shows of fume,
And watchers, far away, admire;
  But when the flames their power assume,
The more they burn the less they show,
  The clouds no longer smirch the sky,
And then the flames intensest glow
  When far-off watchers think they die.
The fumes of early love my verse
  Has figured—" "You must paint the flame!"
"'Twould merit the Promethean curse![1]
  But now, Sweet, for your praise and blame."
"You speak too boldly; veils are due
  To women's feelings," "Fear not this!
Women will vow I say not true,
  And men believe the lips they kiss."
"I did not call you 'Dear' or 'Love,'
  I think, till after Frank was born."
"That fault I cannot well remove;
  The rhymes"—but Frank now blew his horn,
And Walter bark'd on hands and knees,
  At Baby in the mignonette,
And all made, full-cry, for the trees
  Where Felix and his wife were set.
Again disturb'd, (crickets have cares!)
  True to their annual use they rose,
To offer thanks at Evening Prayers
  In three times sacred Sarum Close.

—COMPLETELY PUB. 1905

[1] Prometheus stole fire from the gods to give to man; as a punishment he was chained to a rock, where an eagle gnawed at his liver each day until he was finally released by Hercules.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

1806 – 1861

Long before she met and married Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's popularity and reputation as a major Victorian poet was well established. The eldest of eleven children, Barrett was a confined invalid by twenty-two, dominated by her patriarchal father, Edward. Her literary activity, however, could not be contained so easily: after teaching herself Latin and Greek, Elizabeth Barrett anonymously published *The Battle of Marathon* (1820), at the age of fourteen, *An Essay on Mind, with Other Poems* (1826), when she was twenty, and a translation of *Prometheus Bound* in 1838. Her reputation was established with *The Seraphim and Other Poems* (1838), which was her first signed volume, and *Poems* (1844), which features the famous plea to the social consciences of Victorian middle classes, "The Cry of the Children." Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning began corresponding in January, 1845, but he did not visit her until 21 May. They secretly married in 1846 and settled in Italy, where their son, Robert (Pen) Weidemann, was born. Barrett Browning published the well-known sequence, *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, in the 1850 volume, *Poems*, and her productivity continued with *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), and *Poems Before Congress* (1860). Her most important and impressive work, however, is the verse novel, *Aurora Leigh* (1857), which considers and discusses, against a melodramatic Victorian backdrop, the role of poetry, the female as both writer and heroine, and the circumscribed role of women.

The Romaunt of the Page [1]

I

A knight of gallant deeds
And a young page at his side,
From the holy war in Palestine[2]
Did slow and thoughtful ride,
As each were a palmer[3] and told for beads
The dews of the eventide.

IV

"O young page," said the knight,
"A noble page art thou!
Thou fearest not to steep in blood
The curls upon thy brow;
And once in the tent, and twice in the fight,
Didst ward me a mortal blow."

III

"O brave knight," said the page,
"Or ere we hither came,
We talked in tent, we talked in field,
Of the bloody battle-game;
But here, below this greenwood bough,
I cannot speak the same.

IV

"Our troop is far behind,
The woodland calm is new;
Our steeds, with slow grass-muffled hoofs
Tread deep the shadows through;
And, in my mind, some blessing kind
Is dropping with the dew.

V

"The woodland calm is pure—
I cannot choose but have

[1] a romance; romantic poem or study.

[2] otherwise known as the Crusades (between 1095 and 1270); usually at the request of the pope, Western European Christians led military expeditions to recover Jerusalem and the other Palestinian places of pilgrimage known as the Holy Land from Muslim control.

[3] a pilgrim carrying a palm leaf to represent his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

A thought from these, o' the beechen-trees,
Which in our England wave,
And of the little finches fine
Which sang there while in Palestine
The warrior-hilt we drave.

VI

"Methinks, a moment gone,
I heard my mother pray!
I heard, sir knight, the prayer for me
Wherein she passed away;
And I know the heavens are leaning down
To hear what I shall say."

VII

The page spake calm and high,
As of no mean degree;
Perhaps he felt in nature's broad
Full heart, his own was free:
And the knight looked up to his lifted eye,
Then answered smilingly—

VIII

"Sir page, I pray your grace!
Certes, I meant not so
To cross your pastoral mood, sir page,
With the crook of the battle-bow;
But a knight may speak of a lady's face,
I ween, in any mood or place,
If the grasses die or grow.

IX

"And this I meant to say—
My lady's face shall shine
As ladies' faces use, to greet
My page from Palestine;
Or, speak she fair or prank she gay,
She is no lady of mine.

X

"And this I meant to fear—
Her bower may suit thee ill;
For, sooth, in that same field and tent,
Thy *talk* was somewhat still:
And fitter thy hand for my knightly spear
Than thy tongue for my lady's will!"

XI

Slowly and thankfully
The young page bowed his head;
His large eyes seemed to muse a smile,
Until he blushed instead,
And no lady in her bower, pardiè,[1]
Could blush more sudden red:
"Sir Knight,—thy lady's bower to me
Is suited well," he said.

XII

Beati, beati, mortui!
From the convent on the sea,
One mile off, or scarce so nigh,
Swells the dirge as clear and high
As if that, over break and lea,
Bodily the wind did carry
The great altar of Saint Mary,
And the fifty tapers burning o'er it,
And the Lady Abbess dead before it,
And the chanting nuns whom yester-week
Her voice did charge and bless,—
Chanting steady, chanting meek,
Chanting with a solemn breath,
Because that they are thinking less
Upon the dead than upon death.
Beati, beati, mortui!
Now the vision in the sound
Wheeleth on the wind around;
Now it sweepeth back, away—
The uplands will not let it stay

[1] by god; indeed.

To dark the western sun:
Mortui!—away at last,—
Or ere the page's blush is past!
And the knight heard all, and the page heard none.

XIII

"A boon, thou noble knight,
If ever I served thee!
Though thou art a knight and I am a page,
Now grant a boon to me;
And tell me sooth, if dark or bright,
If little loved or loved aright
Be the face of thy ladye."

XIV

Gloomily looked the knight—
"As a son thou hast served me,
And would to none I had granted boon
Except to only thee!
For haply then I should love aright,
For then I should know if dark or bright
Were the face of my ladye.

XV

"Yet it ill suits my knightly tongue
To grudge that granted boon,
That heavy price from heart and life
I paid in silence down;
The hand that claimed it, cleared in fine
My father's fame: I swear by mine,
That price was nobly won!

XVI

"Earl Walter was a brave old earl,
He was my father's friend;
And while I rode the lists at court
And little guessed the end,
My noble father in his shroud
Against a slanderer lying loud,
He rose up to defend.

XVII

"Oh, calm below the marble grey
My father's dust was strown!
Oh, meek above the marble grey
His image prayed alone!
The slanderer lied: the wretch was brave—
For, looking up the minster-nave,[1]
He saw my father's knightly glaive[2]
Was changed from steel to stone.

XVIII

"Earl Walter's glaive was steel,
With a brave old hand to wear it,
And dashed the lie back in the mouth
Which lied against the godly truth
And against the knightly merit:
The slanderer, 'neath the avenger's heel,
Struck up the dagger in appeal
From stealthy lie to brutal force—
And out upon the traitor's corse
Was yielded the true spirit.

XIX

"I would mine hand had fought that fight
And justified my father!
I would mine heart had caught that wound
And slept beside him rather!
I think it were a better thing
Than murdered friend and marriage-ring
Forced on my life together.

XX

"Wail shook Earl Walter's house;
His true wife shed no tear;
She lay upon her bed as mute
As the earl did on his bier:
Till—'Ride, ride fast,' she said at last,
'And bring the avenged's son anear!

[1] the central part of the monastery church.

[2] a broadsword.

Ride fast, ride free, as a dart can flee,
For white of blee with waiting for me
Is the corse in the next chambère.'

XXI

"I came, I knelt beside her bed;
Her calm was worse than strife:
'My husband, for thy father dear,
Gave freely when thou wast not here
His own and eke my life.
A boon! Of that sweet child we make
An orphan for thy father's sake,
Make thou, for ours, a wife.'

XXII

"I said, 'My steed neighs in the court,
My bark[1] rocks on the brine,
And the warrior's vow I am under now
To free the pilgrim's shrine;
But fetch the ring and fetch the priest
And call that daughter of thine,
And rule she wide from my castle on Nyde
While I am in Palestine.'

XXIII

"In the dark chambère, if the bride was fair,
Ye wis, I could not see,
But the steed thrice neighed, and the priest fast prayed,
And wedded fast were we.
Her mother smiled upon her bed
As at its side we knelt to wed,
And the bride rose from her knee
And kissed the smile of her mother dead,
Or ever she kissed me.

XXIV

"My page, my page, what grieves thee so,
That the tears run down thy face?"—
"Alas, alas! mine own sistèr
Was in thy lady's case:
But *she* laid down the silks she wore
And followed him she wed before,
Disguised as his true servitor,
To the very battle-place."

XXV

And wept the page, but laughed the knight,
A careless laugh laughed he:
"Well done it were for thy sistèr,
But not for my ladye!
My love, so please you, shall requite
No woman, whether dark or bright,
Unwomaned if she be."

XXVI

The page stopped weeping and smiled cold—
"Your wisdom may declare
That womanhood is proved the best
By golden brooch and glossy vest
The mincing ladies wear;
Yet is it proved, and was of old,
Anear as well, I dare to hold,
By truth, or by despair."

XXVII

He smiled no more, he wept no more,
But passionate he spake—
"Oh, womanly she prayed in tent,
When none beside did wake!
Oh, womanly she paled in fight,
For one belovèd's sake!—
And her little hand, defiled with blood,
Her tender tears of womanhood
Most woman-pure did make!"

XXVIII

—"Well done it were for thy sistèr,
Thou tellest well her tale!
But for my lady, she shall pray

[1] small sail boat.

I' the kirk[1] of Nydesdale.
Not dread for me but love for me
Shall make my lady pale;
No casque shall hide her woman's tear—
It shall have room to trickle clear
Behind her woman's veil."

XXIX

—"But what if she mistook thy mind
And followed thee to strife,
Then kneeling did entreat thy love
As Paynims[2] ask for life?"
—"I would forgive, and evermore
Would love her as my servitor,
But little as my wife.

XXX

"Look up—there is a small bright cloud
Alone amid the skies!
So high, so pure, and so apart,
A woman's honour lies."
The page looked up—the cloud was sheen—
A sadder cloud did rush, I ween,
Betwixt it and his eyes.

XXXI

Them dimly dropped his eyes away
From welkin unto hill—
Ha! who rides there?—the page is 'ware,
Though the cry at his heart is still:
And the page seeth all and the knight seeth none,
Though banner and spear do fleck the sun,
And the Saracens[3] ride at will.

XXXII

He speaketh calm, he speaketh low,—
"Ride fast, my master, ride,
Or ere within the broadening dark
The narrow shadows hide."
"Yea, fast, my page, I will do so,
And keep thou at my side."

XXXIII

"Now nay, now nay, ride on thy way,
Thy faithful page precede.
For I must loose on saddle-bow
My battle-casque[4] that galls, I trow,
The shoulder of my steed;
And I must pray, as I did vow.
For one in bitter need.

XXXIV

"Ere night I shall be near to thee,—
Now ride, my master, ride!
Ere night, as parted spirits cleave
To mortals too beloved to leave,
I shall be at thy side."
The knight smiled free at the fantasy,
And adown the dell did ride.

XXXV

Had the knight looked up to the page's face,
No smile the word had won;
Had the knight looked up to the page's face,
I ween he had never gone:
Had the knight looked back to the page's geste,[5]
I ween he had turned anon,
For dread was the woe in the face so young,
And wild was the silent geste that flung
Casque, sword to earth, as the boy downsprung
And stood—alone, alone.

XXXVI

He clenched his hands as if to hold
His soul's great agony—

[1] church.

[2] non-Christians.

[3] referring to Moslems in the time of the Crusades.

[4] helmet.

[5] demeanour; gesture.

"Have I renounced my womanhood,
For wifehood unto *thee*,
And is this the last, last look of thine
That ever I shall see?

XXXVII

"Yet God thee save, and mayst thou have
A lady to thy mind,
More woman-proud and half as true
As one thou leav'st behind!
And God me take with HIM to dwell—
For HIM I cannot love too well,
As I have loved my kind."

XXXVIII

SHE looketh up, in earth's despair,
The hopeful heavens to seek;
That little cloud still floateth there,
Whereof her loved did speak:
How bright the little cloud appears!
Her eyelids fall upon the tears,
And the tears down either cheek.

XXXIX

The tramp of hoof, the flash of steel—
The Paynims round her coming!
The sound and sight have made her calm,—
False page, but truthful woman;
She stands amid them all unmoved:
A heart once broken by the loved
Is strong to meet the foeman.

XL

"Ho, Christian page! art keeping sheep,
From pouring wine-cups resting?"—
"I keep my master's noble name,
For warring, not for feasting;
And if that here Sir Hubert were,
My master brave, my master dear,
Ye would not stay the questing."

XLI

"Where is thy master, scornful page,
That we may slay or bind him?"—
"Now search the lea and search the wood,
And see if ye can find him!
Nathless, as hath been often tried,
Your Paynim heroes faster ride
Before him than behind him."

XLII

"Give smoother answers, lying page,
Or perish in the lying!"—
"I trow that if the warrior brand
Beside my foot, were in my hand,
'Twere better at replying!"
They cursed her deep, the smote her low,
The cleft her golden ringlets through;
The Loving is the Dying.

XLIII

She felt the scimitar gleam down,
And met it from beneath
With smile more bright in victory
Than any sword from sheath,—
Which flashed across her lip serene,
Most like the spirit-light between
The darks of life and death.

XLIV

Ingemisco, ingemisco!
From the convent on the sea,
Now it sweepeth solemnly,
As over wood and over lea
Bodily the wind did carry
The great altar of St. Mary,
And the fifty tapers paling o'er it,
And the Lady Abbess stark before it.
And the weary nuns with hearts that faintly
Beat along their voices saintly
Ingemisco, ingemisco!
Dirge for abbess laid in shroud

Sweepeth o'er the shroudless dead,
Page or lady, as we said,
With the dews upon her head,
All as sad if not as loud.
Ingemisco, ingemisco!
Is ever a lament begun
By any mourner under sun,
Which, ere it endeth, suits but *one*?
—1844

Lady Geraldine's Courtship:

A Romance of the Age.

A Poet writes to his Friend. Place—A Room in Wycombe Hall. Time—Late in the evening.

I

Dear my friend and fellow-student, I would lean my spirit o'er you!
Down the purple of this chamber tears should scarcely run at will.
I am humbled who was humble. Friend, I bow my head before you:
You should lead me to my peasants, but their faces are too still.

II

There's a lady, an earl's daughter,—she is proud and she is noble,
And she treads the crimson carpet and she breathes the perfumed air,
And a kingly blood sends glances up, her princely eye to trouble,
And the shadow of a monarch's crown is softened in her hair.

III

She has halls among the woodlands, she has castles by the breakers,
She has farms and she has manors, she can threaten and command:
And the palpitating engines snort in steam across her acres,
As they mark upon the blasted heaven the measure of the land.

IV

There are none of England's daughters who can show a prouder presence;
Upon princely suitors' praying she has looked in her disdain.
She was sprung of English nobles, I was born of English peasants;
What was *I* that I should love her, save for competence to pain?

V

I was only a poor poet, made for singing at her casement,
As the finches or the thrushes, while she thought of other things
Oh, she walked so high above me, she appeared to my abasement,
In her lovely silken murmur, like an angel clad in wings!

VI

Many vassals bow before her as her carriage sweeps their doorways;
She has blest their little children, as a priest or queen were she:
Far too tender, or too cruel far, her smile upon the poor was,
For I thought it was the same smile which she used to smile on *me*.

VII

She has voters in the Commons, she has lovers in the palace,

Page	Honoria
speaks challenges of noble active love	silent

F	Knight
sympathetic	self conscious
abstract	conformist.

ELIZA COOK (1818–1889)

For why should the white man wrong the one
Who never did harm to him?

We know there's a hand that has fixed the hill
And planted the prairie plain;
That can fling the lightnings when it will,
And pour out the torrent rain.
Far away and alone, where the headlong tide
Dashes on with our bold canoe.
We ask and trust that hand to guide
And carry us safely through.
The Great Spirit dwells in the beautiful sun,
And while we kneel in its light,
Who will not own that the hunter one
Has an altar pure and bright?

The painted streak on a warrior's cheek
Appears a wondrous thing;
The white man stares at a wampum[1] belt,
And a plume from the heron's wing.
But the red man wins the panthers' skins
To cover his dauntless form;
While the pale-face hides his breast in a garb
That he takes from the crawling worm.
And your lady fair, with her gems so rare,
Her ruby, gold, and pearl,
Would be as strange to other eyes
As the bone-decked Indian girl.

Then why does the cruel, white man come
With the war-whoop's yelling sound?
Oh! why does he take our wigwam home,
And the jungled hunting-ground?
The wolf-cub has its lair of rest,
And the wild horse where to dwell,
And the Spirit who gave the bird its nest
Made me a place as well.
Then back, go back, from the red-skin's track;
For the hunter's eyes grow dim,
To find that the white man wrongs the one
Who never did harm to him.
—1845

[1] small beads made of shells, used by North American Indians for ornament, money, etc.

Song of the Ugly Maiden

Oh! the world gives little of love or light,
Though my spirit pants for much;
For I have no beauty for the sight,
No riches for the touch.
I hear men sing o'er the flowing cup
Of woman's magic spell;
And vows of zeal they offer up,
And eloquent tales they tell.
They bravely swear to guard the fair
With strong, protecting arms;
But will they worship woman's worth
Unblent with woman's charms?
No! ah, no! 'tis little they prize
Crookbacked forms and rayless eyes.

Oh! 'tis a saddening thing to be
A poor and Ugly one;
In the sand Time puts in his glass for me,
Few sparkling atoms run.
For my drawn lids bear no shadowing fringe,
My locks are thin and dry;
My teeth wear not the rich pearl tinge,
Nor my lips the henna dye.
I know full well I have naught of grace
That maketh woman "divine;"
The wooer's praise and doting gaze
Have never yet been mine.
Where'er I go all eyes will shun
The loveless mien of the Ugly one.

I join the crowd where merry feet
Keep pace with the merry strain;
I note the earnest words that greet

The fair ones in the train.
The stripling youth has passed me by;
He leads another out!
She has a light and laughing eye,
Like sunshine playing about.
The wise man scanneth calmly round,
But his gaze stops not with me;
It has fixed on a head whose curls, unbound,
Are bright as curls can be;
And he watches her through the winding dance
With smiling care and tender glance.

The gay cavalier has thrust me aside;
Whom does he hurry to seek?
One with a curving lip of pride,
And a forehead white and sleek.
The grey-haired veteran, young with wine,
Would head the dance once more;
He looks for a hand, but passes mine.
As all have passed before.
The pale, scarred face may sit alone,
The unsightly brow may mope;
There cometh no tongue with winning tone
To flatter Affection's hope.
O Ugliness! thy desolate pain
Had served to set the stamp on Cain.[1]

My quick brain hears the thoughtless jeers
That are whispered with laughing grin;
As though I had fashioned my own dull orbs,
And chosen my own seared skin.
Who shall dream of the withering pang,
As I find myself forlorn—
Hung apart, with lonely heart,
Mid cold neglect and scorn?
For I, to be glad as others are,
For my soul is young and warm;
And kind it had been to darken and mar
My feelings with my form;

[1] The eldest son of Adam and Eve, who killed his brother Abel: Genesis 4.

For fondly and strong as my spirit may yearn,
It gains no sweet love in return.

Man, just Man! I know thine eye
Delighteth to dwell on those
Whose tresses shade, with curl or braid,
Cheeks soft and round as the rose.
I know thou wilt ever gladly turn
To the beautiful and bright;
But is it well that thou shouldst spurn
The one GOD chose to blight?
Oh! why shouldst thou trace my shrinking face
With coarse, deriding jest?
Oh! why forget that a charmless brow
May abide with a gentle breast?
Oh! why forget that gold is found
Hidden beneath the roughest ground?

Would that I had passed away
Ere I knew that I was born;
For I stand in the blessed light of day
Like a weed among the corn,—
The black rock in the wide, blue sea—
The snake in the jungle green,
Oh! who will stay in the fearful way
Where such ugly things are seen?
Yet mine is the fate of lonelier state
Than that of the snake or rock;
For those who behold me in their path
Not only shun, but mock.
O Ugliness! thy desolate pain
Had served to set the stamp on Cain.
—1845

My Old Straw Hat

Farewell, old friend,—we part at last;
Fruits, flowers, and summer, all are past;
And when the beech-leaves bid adieu,
My Old Straw Hat must vanish too.

ROBERT BROWNING. (1812–1889)

Thus, ere he fashioned star or sun.
And having thus created me,
Thus rooted me, he bade me grow,
Guiltless for ever, like a tree
That buds and blooms, nor seeks to know
The law by which it prospers so:
But sure that thought and word and deed
All go to swell his love for me,
Me, made because that love had need
Of something irreversibly
Pledged solely its content to be.
Yes, yes, a tree which must ascend,
No poison-gourd foredoomed to stoop!
I have God's warrant, could I blend
All hideous sins, as in a cup,
To drink the mingled venoms up;
Secure my nature will convert
The draught to blossoming gladness fast:
While sweet dews turn to the gourd's hurt,
And bloat, and while they bloat it, blast,
As from the first its lot was cast.
For as I lie, smiled on, full-fed
By unexhausted power to bless,
I gaze below on hell's fierce bed,
And those its waves of flame oppress,
Swarming in ghastly wretchedness;
Whose life on earth aspired to be
One altar-smoke, so pure!—to win
If not love like God's love for me,
At least to keep his anger in;
And all their striving turned to sin.
Priest, doctor, hermit, monk grown white
With prayer, the broken-hearted nun,
The martyr, the wan acolyte,
The incense-swinging child,—undone
Before God fashioned star or sun!
God, whom I praise; how could I praise,
If such as I might understand,
Make out and reckon on his ways,
And bargain for his love, and stand,
Paying a price, at his right hand?
—1836

Porphyria's Lover

The rain set early in tonight,
The sullen wind was soon awake,
It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
And did its worst to vex the lake:
I listened with heart fit to break.
When glided in Porphyria; straight
She shut the cold out and the storm,
And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
Which done, she rose, and from her form
Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
And, last, she sat down by my side
And called me. When no voice replied,
She put my arm about her waist,
And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
And all her yellow hair displaced,
And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
Murmuring how she loved me—she
Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
To set its struggling passion free
From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
And give herself to me for ever.
But passion sometimes would prevail,
Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
A sudden thought of one so pale
For love of her, and all in vain:
So, she was come through wind and rain.
Be sure I looked up at her eyes
Happy and proud; at last I knew
Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
Made my heart swell, and still it grew
While I debated what to do.

That moment she was mine, mine, fair,
Perfectly pure and good: I found
A thing to do, and all her hair
In one long yellow string I wound
Three times her little throat around,
And strangled her. No pain felt she;
I am quite sure she felt no pain.
As a shut bud that holds a bee,
I warily oped her lids: again
Laughed the blue eyes without a stain.
And I untightened next the tress
About her neck; her cheek once more
Blushed bright beneath my burning kiss:
I propped her head up as before,
Only, this time my shoulder bore
Her head, which droops upon it still:
The smiling rosy little head,
So glad it has its utmost will,
That all it scorned at once is fled,
And I, its love, am gained instead!
Porphyria's love: she guessed not how
Her darling one wish would be heard.
And thus we sit together now,
And all night long we have not stirred,
And yet God has not said a word!

—1836

Pictor Ignotus [1]

FLORENCE, 15–

I could have painted pictures like that youth's[2]
Ye praise so. How my soul springs up! No bar
Stayed me—ah, thought which saddens while it soothes!
—Never did fate forbid me, star by star,
Outburst on your night with all my gift
Of fires from God: nor would my flesh have shrunk
From seconding my soul, with eyes uplift
And wide to heaven, or, straight like thunder, sunk
To the centre, of an instant; or around
Turned calmly and inquisitive, to scan
The licence and the limit, space and bound,
Allowed to truth made visible in man.
And, like that youth ye praise so, all I saw,
Over the canvas could my hand have flung,
Each face obedient to its passion's law,
Each passion clear proclaimed without a tongue;
Whether Hope rose at once in all the blood,
A-tiptoe for the blessing of embrace,
Or Rapture drooped the eyes, as when her brood
Pull down the nesting dove's heart to its place;
Or Confidence lit swift the forehead up,
And locked the mouth fast, like a castle braved,—[3]
O human faces, hath it spilt, my cup?
What did ye give me that I have not saved?
Nor will I say I have not dreamed (how well!)
Of going—I, in each new picture,—forth,
As, making new hearts beat and bosoms swell,
To Pope or Kaiser, East, West, South, or North,
Bound for the calmly-satisfied great State,
Or glad aspiring little burgh, it went,
Flowers cast upon the car[4] which bore the freight,
Through old streets named afresh from the event,
Till it reached home, where learned age should greet
My face, and youth, the star not yet distinct
Above his hair, lie learning at my feet!—
Oh, thus to live, I and my picture, linked
With love about, and praise, till life should end,
And then not go to heaven, but linger here,
Here on my earth, earth's every man my friend,—
The thought grew frightful, 'twas so wildly dear!

[1] This designation "Pictor Ignotus" (Latin, "painter unknown") is used by many art museums. "Ignotus" also means "obscure."

[2] probably Raphael (1483–1520).

[3] threatened.

[4] chariot.

Arthur Munby

1828 – 1910

Arthur Munby was a civil servant, diarist, and minor poet. He was obsessed with working-class women, and his verse concerns that group and country life. Munby's diaries reveal that his obsession was partly sexual in nature, and his interest in working-class women led him to pursue, interview, record, and photograph them. In 1873 he secretly married his maidservant, Hannah Cullwick (1833–1909).

The Serving Maid

When you go out at early morn,
Your busy hands, sweet drudge, are bare;
For you must work, and none are there
To see with scorn—to feel with scorn.

And when the weekly wars begin,
Your arms are naked to the hilt,
And many a sturdy pail's a-tilt
To sheathe them in—to plunge them in.

For you at least can understand
That daily work is hard and stern,
That those who toil for bread must learn
To bare the hand—to spoil the hand.

But in the evening, when they dine,
And you behind each frequent chair
Are flitting lightly here and there
To bring them wine—to pour them wine;

Oh then, from every dainty eye
That may not so be shock'd or grieved,
Your hands are hid, your arms are sleeved:
We see not why—we tell not why.

Alas! Though you for workday scours,
And they for show, unveil their charms,
Love is not bound to snowy arms,
He thinks of yours—he speaks of yours:

To me his weighted shaft has come;
Though hand and arm are both unseen,
Your rosy wrist peeps out between
And sends it home—and speeds it home.
—1865

Post Mortem[1]

I lay in my coffin under the sod;
But the rooks they caw'd, and the sheep they trod
And munch'd and bleated, and made such a noise—
What with the feet of the charity boys[2]
Trampling over the old grave-stones—
That it loosen'd my inarticulate bones,
And chased my sleep away.

So I turn'd (for the coffin is not so full
As it was, you know) my aching skull;
And said to my wife—and it's not my fault
If she *does* lie next to me in the vault—
Said to her kindly, "My love, my dear,
How do you like these sounds we hear
Over our heads to-day?"

My wife had always a good strong voice;
But I'm not so sure that I did rejoice
When I found it as strong as it used to be,
And so unexpectedly close to me:

[1] "after death"; the term was introduced into English in the nineteenth century.

[2] residents of an orphanage.

A Husband's Episodes

I heard a note in my garden bower;
A note of cooing, and kisses of love.
My fair young wife was abroad at that hour:
I saw the cedar branches move,

And two shadows, one of a man,
Certainly pass'd across the lawn
Into the place where *our* kisses began,
When the chamber was still and the curtains drawn.

At last I said, when the morning came,
And she was as sleek as a sunning dove,
"Shall we go forth, my dainty dame,
From the jonquil-nests and the cedar grove,

"And seek the open air of the sea,
Where the blue waves gallop against the shore
Just as the heart of a man, set free,
Bounds toward the steadfast things of yore?"

We went; for she did not spy my drift:
She only saw, that down by the sea
There would be many a change and shift,
And many a chance of escape from me.

But I was 'ware of a certain walk,
Close to the edge of the cliffs so tall,
Where ledges and lumps of the crafty chalk
Break off to the deep, that swallows them all.

We walk'd there once, and not in vain;
For ever so long it had not slid,
The rock was loosen'd now by rain,
And I thought it would slide that day. It did.

I went down with it into the foam;
And the crowner's 'quest absolving me,
I turn'd (with crape on my hat) toward home,
And waited awhile till the end should be.

I had not long to wait for him:
He came, with malice shut up in his eyes,
With his tongue so trite, and his smile so trim,
And gave me comfort, and gave me sighs:

But, when I went with him back to the train—
Just as a friend should do, you know—
We talk'd the sad tale over again;
And, whether I let his damp hand go

A little too sharply, who can tell?
But down, with a ghastly groan and grim,
Under the griding[1] wheels he fell;
And the train went over him, limb by limb.

As I drove home that glorious night,
I did not laugh; for you see, my groom
Was sitting behind with his face so white;
And he *could* tell tales to the housemaids' room.

But I gave my leader the lightest touch
Of a whip that would hardly bear control,
And I whistled a few sweet bars—not much—
Of the merry tune that fill'd my soul.

Ah well! The work of my life is done:
But I should be rather glad, d'ye know,
To get away from the shining sun,
And hide my triumph beneath my woe.
—1865

T' Runawaa Lass

"Wah, Mary! sittin' lawnsum of a bench,
Wi' leean white fingers clasp'd, an' soonken ah,

[1] a poetical term, meaning to pierce through or scrape.

The Douglass Series
On Women's Lives and the Meaning of Gender

The Diaries of HANNAH CULLWICK, Victorian Maidservant

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LIZ STANLEY

'Ah,' my darling added . . . 'Ah, ours is a story that, a hundred years hence, no one would believe!' Not so: perchance they shall both know and believe it; and, if they honour her as she deserves, it is enough for me.
Munby's diary, 7 May 1874

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PLEASE READ PORTIONS MARKED IN BRACKETS [....]

EXCERPTS FROM "HANNAH'S PLACES"

to Lower Brook St, Grosvenor Square, hired of Col. Hutchinson for two months. I was pleas'd with London, & besides, I was more at work in the kitchen & I thought it better for me to *learn* more.

In '51 I'd orders to go again next to 12 Grosvenor Street. I was still scullion but the cook said I was a good 'un to work & he'd rather have me nor Emma the kitchenmaid. I came back again at the end of two months, with the family, to Pitchford again & from there to Woodcote for the two grand balls at Shrewsbury. The company stay'd at Pitchford for them, so we was both very gay & hard-work'd too, for I seem'd as pleas'd to peep through the bushes to see the ladies & gentlemen start as if I was one of 'em.

At home the kitchenmaid & me had our meals alone in the kitchen & at tea one day I saw a man's face as clearly as could be in the fire, & I show'd it to Emma. She said, 'Ah one of us will see somebody like that some day.' It was such a nice manly face with a moustache.[4] I little thought *I sh'd* see such a face, much less to love such a face, but in '54 I *did* see it. It was the day after I'd turned 21 & I was took to London again. My brother had been to see me & I walk'd with him part of his way home. I'd my lilac frock, a blue spotted shawl & my black bonnet on, & an apron. When I had kiss'd Dick & turn'd again & was crossing for the back street on the way to Grosvenor St, a gentleman spoke to me & I answered him. That was Massa's face as I'd seen in the fire but I didn't know it again till a good while after. I was to leave London again wi' the family in June – I come back early in '55. I had to leave Woodcote. I started to London & got lodgings, in the *cold*, a tiny room it was, for 5 & 6^{D} a week. There Massa came to see me again, & there was where I first black'd my face with *oil & lead*.[5]

At the end of three weeks I got another kitchenmaid's place (I forgot to say how Lady Louisa rais'd me first before I come to London last time) at Lord Shadbroke's. But it was at Henham in Suffolk, a long way off, & I shall never forget how miserable I felt when M. wish'd me good-

bye & left me alone ready to start at 5 o'clock next morning. I rode to Shoreditch station & then had a cold ride in the train to Ipswich. After that 30 miles in the coach to the Lodge gates where the laundrymaid met me with a man & a cart for my box. The housekeeper star'd at me but didn't speak for ever so long & then said to the charwoman, 'She looks young,' & then to me, 'You can go in the laundry for some tea & then come in to get His Lordship's dinner up.' I'd made her a curtsy & when she made no answer I thought I was sure she was unkind & my heart began to fail me, but the servants was nice in the laundry & I made haste, & put my cotton frock & cap & apron on to be in the kitchen by 6. Mrs Smith the housekeeper was most unkind to me in ordering & I was ready to say I'd go back in the morning. I told Bill the groom I would but he said, 'Never mind her, she's drunk & doesn't know what she's about – you stop & you'll get on all right,' & as it was winter & so far back I thought I'd try to stop. The scullion had gone with the kitchen maid but another was got. Mrs Smith gave up coming in the kitchen after 2 or 3 months.

The Countess of Shadbroke, His Lordship's mother, wish'd us servants a kind goodbye & said how she thought it'd be her last visit to Henham so gave us under servants a new cotton frock & ½ a sovereign, the upper housemaid & laundrymaid a whole one & a stuff frock each. The lady gave me good advice. I wasn't to mind the housekeeper's temper but learn all I could of her, for she says, 'She's an excellent cook & baker & whatever you see her do you may be sure it's right.' 'And be true, Hannah,' she said, 'be careful whom you choose for a husband.' And after the countess had shown me the pictures in the room which she said she painted & used to get up so early for, *for the light*, she shook my rough hand in her very delicate one, & said goodbye. It *was* the first & last time too that ever a lady like her touch'd my hand. And it *was* her last visit too, for at the end o' the year she died, & we was all put into black livery for her, & by this time I'd got my sister Ellen living with me as scullion. In the spring, for the first time, my

lord went to a house in London & took the butler & a footman, a housemaid & *me*, for two months. I shall never forget how delighted I felt when Mary Clark the housemaid whisper'd to me what she believed – that a house was took & that I sh'd have to go as well as her. I thought I *was* lucky after all, & I sh'd see my Massa again.

Well, we had orders, & started early one fine morning. The butler rode in the same carriage with us & talk'd quite freely & joked with us but I was thinking mostly of who I sh'd see when I got to London. It was a nice little house in South St, Park Lane, & there I had to wait on the butler & the town housekeeper & clean their sitting room, do the front steps & all the lowest places underground. But I liked the work & Massa used to come up 2 or 3 times a week & go in the park with me. And when I could I ax'd leave for the evening & went to the Temple with him – for M. had shown me the way & ax'd to go, *if I liked*. Of course I was shy at it first, but I wasn't *afraid*. I forget whether I'd begun to wash his feet then or not, but it wasn't very long afore I did. I was glad of that as well as any other jobs Massa found me to do, both for being useful & for showing my humility, & that I never wanted to be set up.[6]

The time come again & I went back to Henham again. I ax'd the housekeeper Mrs Smith if she would speak to L. Shadbroke for my young sister Ellen to be scullerymaid with me. He spoke to me & ax'd if I'd any brothers soldiers, & how many there was of us. I answered & curtsied to him of course, humbly, & he said my sister might come. I sent money for her to get clothes, & on a *Friday* about August she came, 1855. She was hardly 16 years old but grown quite big & was got over the dreadful cold & rheumatic illness she had a while ago, when I walk'd 10 miles from Pitchford to see her. The flood from the heavy rain was on the road & I waded through the water up to my thighs, 'cause I wouldn't turn back. That was at 5 o'clock i' the morning, for I started at 4 & this was ½ way on the road. My aunt had wrote to say she couldn't live & I got leave from Lady Louisa.

And it was then, when I come back & miss'd the carrier's

cart from Shrewsbury & started to walk, that Major Evans offer'd me a lift in his carriage. Capt. Humphries was with him & got down to help me up behind the carriage & talk'd to me on the road & gave me sweets, what I dropp'd as he gave 'em 'cause I wouldn't eat 'em. And when it was time for me to get down (just a mile or so off my place) Capt. H. got down first, & then Major drove off & left him with me, in a very lonely place but I never thought anything of it till he offer'd to kiss me & said something about me bein' pretty. Two men come round the corner just then, but I wouldn't let them see my face. And when they was gone I said, '*Sir*, if you offer to touch me again I'll do something you won't like, so you go your way & I'll go mine. I'm much oblig'd for the ride, but I don't want you to come with me, I can find my way.' He wanted to shake hands but I said, 'No, sir, *I certainly will not*.' And he let me go. I turned round some time after & he was standing in the same place.

I felt I'd had an escape, but thought [I] would tell no one of it. I met the postman & ax'd him who was stopping with Major Evans, & that's how I knew the Capt.'s name. The postman said, 'You hanna met with *him*, have you?' For he says, 'He's one o'the worst rogues out.' I said, 'Oh no, only the Major give me a lift from Shrewsbury & there was another gentleman with him.' I got back but I couldn't feel easy till I'd told Eliza the kitchenmaid. I never saw no more of him & soon after we went to Woodcote again. My sister was with me in the winter at Henham & we was order'd again to London in the spring, & I didn't go back again. Massa came to see me in Suffolk & lost his way on the road back to his hotel at Halesworth, & he told me if I stopp'd then he wouldn't come again.

And then I got a place out o' the newspaper, at a Jew's family in Westhame Park. I lik'd the place for some things – the work was regular & I was a proper maid of all work like except waiting at table. I clean'd the knives & boots, the doorsteps & all that, & I was content at 16 lbs [£16] a year. But a fresh housemaid came, named Ellen Maison, a niece o' the rich *Millionaire Morrison* as they call'd him,

work, & the air at Margate, & used to go to church, & [I] could write freely & nicely that I felt quite happy. And so I agreed to stop on through the summer.

[And lots of nice jobs & lowest work I did the while, for there was lots o' fresh lodgers come through the summer – carrying luggage up & down, laying carpets as the lady wanted 'em, & one proud one stood over me as I knelt & was crawling on the floor once. Instead of her showing me how with her hand she kick'd me with her foot & pointed. I dare say she thought I *sh'd* feel hurt & vex'd with her but I didn't. I was glad she thought me humble enough without kicking again.

I used to clean the grates with my hands before the Miss Knights. The one in bed call'd me, & she pour'd water on to my black hand to wet the grate with it, & so she wasn't disgusted. And I crawled back to the grate & scrubbed away till I was all of a sweat, & I used my hands all I could – to shove the soot & cinders up & all that.

A good deal of rough work I got through there. I emptied the [ ] wi' my hands on my knees. Miss Julia used to like seeing me clean & after the sweep. She said she thought it very interesting to see me clean the paint so thoroughly – as I did, standing on the dresser doing from the top – & so she sat & watched me do it. They was ladies, but poor through their having a second mother, so they kept this for a living. I was sorry when I left in October, but they couldn't afford to keep me when the lodgers was gone, & I wanted too to get nearer Massa again. Poor M. was riding at home & the horse slipped & threw him off & cut his face so badly that he was afraid it'd kill him. I didn't know the worst till after. When I come back to London I went to the Servants' Home near the Strand. M. found he mustn't stop in town his head ach'd so bad, & I heard of a place at St Leonards through the Matron & took it. Miss Knight gave me a capital character & I'd got Mrs Foster's too so I sent both. Mrs Caulfield hired me from them & the Matron's good word, & I went just at Christmas time & stopp'd two years. I left the end of 1867, come to London & went to the Soho Bazaar & got a

place at another lodging house in Craven Street, Charing Cross, at a Mrs Bishops.

I had 5 fireplaces to do at Mrs Caulfield's every morning, the dining room & study & the halls & steps, the lady's maid's room & all the places on the lower ground to keep clean. There was a nice garden to look at & they went away twice for two months, leaving us servants our board wages, which was very nice & we could do as we liked & that while they was away. It was a real gentleman's family. We had plenty o' work while they was at home & when they was out we cleaned the house thoroughly all through-out, & I worked in the garden if I liked. But I was so far off Massa & at last I give notice & I left.

[I] went to Mrs Bishops in the new year of '68 & stopp'd only 3 months, for Mrs Bishop was a vulgar person & couldn't understand me. She kept a private hotel & boarding house & took in lodgers. I saw that she was vulgar at the bazaar & I oughtn't to o' took the place.[9] But it was near to Massa, & Mrs Bishop spoke fair about wages & letting me go out so I thought I might do. I went in the beginning of 1868 & I was to get all the meals ready, keep coffee & boiling water always ready, clean the hall & steps every morning, the stairs & kitchen, pantry, larder & scullery, & to clean the boots & knives if there was only a few lodgers. I did all I could to show that I liked dirty hard work, but Mrs Bishop never seemed satisfied, & I wasn't either. There ~~was a something about the~~ place so low lifed, & yet I thought I needn't mind so long as I could work on & be honest & get out to see Massa easily. But the Missis said I didn't look after her interests enough in the board & things for the lodgers, so she give me warning after two months & it was well.

I helped the other servants to clean up stairs, & carry the luggage up, & I clean'd the leads outside[10] & did one room or two out thoroughly & whatever the Missis told me. Once in the hall I was on my hands & knees cleaning & a gentleman came in. I was in his way but he stepped over & said, 'Don't move, Mary.' I said, 'Thank you, sir.' And when I went to get the valentine from a shop for Massa, the

woman saw how dirty I was looking & said, 'I see you're a poor servant so you may have that one for 6^{D}.' I left again & was up at Mrs Smith's lodgings a week or two, then I went to a register office & paid ½ a crown. The gentleman got me a place at an asylum in the country & the lady was satisfied with my character & I nearly settled when to go, but Massa seem'd inclin'd for me to go to Miss Knight's at Margate again & I wrote to her.

She sent me an answer to say how much she sh'd like me for the summer if I could go for the wages as before. I wrote her a nice humble letter & so I started off again & carried my bundle & bag to the station & again to her new home atop o' the fort, for she'd moved this time & was keeping *only* a lodging house. Miss K shook hands with me after I curtsied to her & seemed so pleas'd to see me again. This time there was another servant, but till the house was full I fill'd my time up wi' cleaning up stairs & doing all I could. There was separate dinners for all the lodgers & I was very hard work'd. I fetch'd all the beer as was wanted & did all errands.

A Mr Linke came from India to stop in the bottom room. I waited on him. He was in bad health, & I offer'd to wash his feet. He let me do it & seem'd pleas'd, & gave me 2 & 6^{D} when he left. Massa came at Whitsuntide & stopp'd in the same room just to see me as a servant in a lodging house.[11] I was pleas'd to wait on him all I could, & was pleas'd when Miss Knight ask'd me if I didn't think that gentleman was good-looking. I said, 'Why yes, ma'am, by what little I've seen of him,' & she wondered what his name was.

The summer went on, & I work'd away & enjoy'd it. Then a Mr Skeats as lodged in the bottom room & was a musician at the dancing room badly wanted me to be his maid of all work, & even had his wife come from London to see me. I partly agreed with her & was to go to her house in London when I left Margate. I went but Mrs Skeats was out & I didn't go again. I went to the bazaar & hired myself to Mrs Redmayne of Gloucester Gardens but I wasn't wanted till January. It seem'd a good place & as

I'd sewing to do at Mrs Smith's I didn't mind giving myself the holiday, & to be with Massa more. I found plenty of rough jobs to do for Mrs Smith in the time, so as it was [it] soon slipp'd by.

I found plenty of work but at the end of three months, March 1869, I'd warning to leave *there* for the master was order'd abroad & we *all* had to leave. I had a hard place but I was vex'd at having to leave so soon. Next I was egg'd on to go after a better sort o' place at Mrs Sanders where a kitchenmaid was kept. I walk'd up & down & look'd at the house, afraid to go in. But I went & saw Mrs Sanders & she seem'd to like me, & was quite willing to try me, & I was to have high wages – *22 lbs* [£22]. They got my character & I went in April 1869.

They was going in the country to live in the Isle O' Wight & I was going with 'em but something happened that stopp'd it. The manservant was prying & got to know who I wrote to, & this man had lived [as a] servant at a relation of Massa's & waited on him, so that he know'd him quite well. M. walk'd pass'd one Sunday waiting for me, & this man saw him & made the worst of it to Mr Sanders & he ax'd me about it. I told him it was true, but no harm in it, Mr Sanders said he quite believed me, but he couldn't let me stop after so much was know'd. And I said it was much better too, 'cause the servants would think bad of it. Besides I didn't feel fit to have a kitchenmaid under me, 'cause I wanted to do the washing up & the roughest work myself. So I left & I got a place again as general servant where a housemaid & a boy was kept.

On 16 July 1869 I went to it & stopp'd till the end of February 1872. The work I had there & the trials I had to bear & how it all ended well will be fully put in my diary.

I said a lady had never touch'd my hand before the Countess of Shadbroke did, but I meant *such* a lady. It wasn't the first time a lady touched me, for it was one who give me to the clergyman when I was christened – a Mrs Eyton whom Mother used to dress & live with. She stood to me & named me as much like herself as my mother would let her. Her own name was *Anna Maria Dorothea* & she

wanted mine to be the same. But my mother said it was too much out of the way for mine, & all it sh'd be was *Hannah* & that'd be a scripture name & a plain name & still something like my godmother's. So that's how my name came to be Hannah – as plain a name for a *servant* as could be. Betty Parton, who's now in the widow's home where my aunt is, says she well remembers the day I was christen'd for she was in the church with another child, & how Miss Eyton look'd.

I was born in 1833, & the furthest back I can remember was when I was 5 years old & Mrs Neave (my godmother who was married by then) was visiting at Major Moultine's at Aston Hall. She sent a butler to our house [wi'] both a Bible for me & a new print dress for Mother – & she & me was to go up that evening to the Hall to see her. I remember it because it seem'd so grand to me & I polish'd my shoes as well as ever I could & I trotted up by Mother as fast as possible o' purpose to see my godmother who was a *lady*! She kiss'd me I know & gave me cake & mine was brought on a tray, but I canna remember the face very clear. I made a nice curtsy & was sorry when I come away & wonder'd when I sh'd see her again. I've never seen her since – she bin abroad, but is back again in England so I *might*, for her sent to me twice 1 lb [£1]. And while I was at Aqualate Mr Edward Eyton sent me ½ a sovereign from her, with a message that I was to call & see her sister Mrs Beckwith of Eaton Constantine – she would be glad to see me. It's by Wellington so perhaps I shall go.

It was when I was 5 years old & went to see Mrs Neave that I was let into the Charity School. She bought me my first suit o' clothes, & got Mrs Moultine to take me in. I went regular till I was eight, & it was in my month's holiday at harvest time & Saturdays that I used to go on leasing[12] & picking manure on the road & helping father in his bit o' land. And it was after I left the school (when I could read & write & *mark* & sew, & could do all my governess could teach me, knitting socks as well) that us bigger children, Jim & Dick & me, got a job at Beckbury – to pick peas for a market gardener named Collins. It was

4 mile good to walk to it, but we was pleas'd to get the money & we started with good heart. They made beds for us on the floor in their house & we was call'd up every morning two o'clock & our dinner was brought to the field to eat under the hedge. We stopp'd a week or more & then came back, but Mr Collins said he would come to Shifnal & pay us. There was others went as well as us.

After I'd left Mrs Henderson a few weeks I got a letter[13] from Miss Margaret telling me of a lady as wanted a woman, trustworthy & useful, for a time, & to take care o' the house if the lady sh'd go away, & gave me the directions to go next night to see her. The lady's name was Miss Otway, living in Eaton Terrace, Eaton Square, & [I] was to go towards nine o'clock. . . . The servant as was there said Miss O. was out but expected back at 9, would I walk up & down a bit in the street. I thank'd her & I had to wait ½ an hour or so, & at last I saw a lady with a little dog on a string & a little page boy (not dress'd as one tho') walking behind her. I said, 'I beg your pardon but are you Miss Otway?' She said, 'Oh yes.' I said, 'Miss Margaret Henderson sent me.' 'The dear little thing,' Miss O. said. 'Oh yes I can believe all she told me about you, come in, but speak very low as I don't want the servant downstairs to know what you've come for. I don't know when I can get rid of her, but I'll tell you all about it after, you know. I must go in & pay Mrs Ingle to finish. I'm in a great hurry, but when I've got money I never like to owe anything.'

So I waited outside & then she come out, & rang the bell of her own house & Miss O. took me in the dining room. I curtsied to her. She ask'd me if I could clean grates, I said, 'Yes, ma'am,' & a few more questions. But she says, 'I needn't ask about your temper, your face looks good & Miss Margaret spoke so highly of you I'm sure you'll be an excellent creature.' I thought she was uncommonly free & I didn't like her manner. For a Missis she was a deal too free to last, but I was only to be a charwoman so it didn't matter to me. . . .

I went again next night & Massa came with me – he

waited outside. I was let in by Miss Otway. She'd got someone in the parlour & told me to go down to the kitchen. A more wretched place I never went into. I felt very uncomfortable & sat there stock still, feeling the difference 'twixt it & an hour before with M. in his room & why I couldn't just tell him, when another servant came with her bundle & I found she was used to the place, having bin 3 times afore, but only 2 or 3 weeks at a time. Anybody was better nor no one & she laugh'd & talk'd & joked & said if we stopp'd a week it'd be good, & two weeks'd be a wonder, so we was all right. She (Jane) being as well surprised to find me there, & said how she thought I'd come from a servants' home or an institution. Well, we stopp'd 6 weeks! I at cleaning & waiting on the lady. How I had a bad thumb & the work I did & how I left comes in my diary [of] 1872.

A SERVANT'S LIFE 1866-72[1]

I left Mrs Caulfield's at St Leonards On Sea, in December[2] – on my own account being so far off Massa & feeling out o' the way of everybody. Not that I'd a bad place by any means. I'd plenty o' regular work & was having high wages & had an excellent fellow servant most of the two years I was there, but Elizabeth went away in the spring. I felt more lonely than ever & much as I disliked leaving my places, still I made up my mind to leave, & I lodged again at Mrs Smith's in Clerkenwell. Coming to London again seem'd partly like coming *home*. I was in such a hurry to see Massa that I left my boxes at Charing Cross Station & walk'd on thinking to find him at home, but I was curiously vex'd & disappointed to find he was *not* in. I waited as long as I thought I ought, anxious & hoping for nearly ½ an hour, & then walk'd on to Mrs Smith's. I carried a heavy bag & handbox with me & got there about 9 o'clock. Mrs Smith had kindly got a bed ready for me & some supper, but if I'd seen M. I sh'd have been satisfied.

I wrote to him & posted the letter before 11 o'clock to say I was come, for it was in this way. He had written for me to *tramp* my way up to London as I did from Margate to Canterbury. [I] meant to all the way but I was so footsore I could not walk at all next day but stay'd at Chatham with my fellow servant at her home. Her father's named Lydiard & was postman there & a tailor by trade & Jane did tell me he was a relation of Lord Bolingbroke's. Well [I] pack'd up things to serve me on the road & took my

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talk'd to me & seem'd to like me & settled to give me wages & a holiday once in 3 months, & came straight for my character. I suppose when she found it a lodging house & the Missis *not* a lady she didn't like to take me, for I got a letter saying I sh'd not suit her. So I felt it would never do to trust to Mrs Bishop's character, but must fall back to Mrs Caulfield's written character.

The time was up for getting another place for the same money paid at the Soho Bazaar & so I didn't go straight there. On my way in Holborn one day after I'd left I came to a registry office for servants, & went in without meaning to pay anything at first, but the man was so civil & talkative & already told me of a place I sh'd just suit & the wages was good. When I show'd him my written character (for I demanded it of Mrs Bishop[5], it had their crest on, & was written by Mrs Caulfield in a nice ladylike hand, & I wasn't justified in asking her for another) he said, 'Oh, this will do, if you'll let me send it to the lady.' It was to be a responsible kitchen servant at an asylum in Hampshire & I thought, Well, beggars canna be choosers, & I must get a place somewhere. I sh'd like to be near Massa, but when I am in London it's difficult to get to him, people *will* wonder, & suspect me of going where I sh'd not. So I paid him ½ a crown & let him have the character, & I was to hear from him in a day or two.

I did so, & was to see the lady in Cambridge Terrace. I went, & she talk'd with me in the parlour & seem'd satisfied with me & the character, but she was *not* the Missis & I was to hear from her as soon as possible. I told Massa all about it. He was undecided. Miss Knight's he thought would be best for me, at Margate. The change would do me good, besides I knew her, & was sure of being happy at Margate as well as for the air there which suits me so well. And so I was in a straights 'twixt the two places, but Massa left it to me. I drew lots which it was to be & it came for Miss Knight's & I wrote to her, 'Madam – I am out o' place now, & at liberty for another – If you shd be in want of a servant for a few months & would like me to come I shd feel much obliged if you would let me know at your

earliest convenience. Hoping yourself and Miss Knight are well, I am, Madam, Your humble servant, Hannah Cullwick. 6 Wingrove Place Clerkenwell, E.C.'

I got answers from both places. The lady in Hampshire considered me engaged, & Miss Knight wrote me a very kind letter, saying it was early in the season & she had no lodgers yet, but shd be glad of me to come to be in readiness as well as to clean down & get rooms ready, so that I could go as soon as I liked. They had removed to a new house, further out & on the cliff – called 'The New Town', Margate. It was in March 1867 I started from Ludgate Hill Station carrying my bag with my change of working clothes in, & having wish'd Massa goodbye. But he is pleas'd when I come to Margate for he knows I am well there & generally write to him fully & in good spirits. I am a real happy maid of all work then, without restraint, working as hard as I like, & serving a real lady who enjoys seeing me at work & understands & appreciates my big caps & aprons & who condescends to talk to me on *higher* things than just everyday work & not despising one for doing that either, & even wishes she was stronger that they might do without a servant in winter when there are no lodgers.

I reach'd Margate station about 5 o'clock & carried my bag & things through the town & on till I found *17 Athelstan Road* where Miss K. lived & went down to the area door & rang the bell. A young servant came & told me to come in. Soon after Miss Knight came down to me, & shook my bare red hand so kindly & said how glad she was that I was come again & told me how she had been troubled in moving but was straight nearly & wanted the furniture rubb'd up & the windows clean'd & so on, & she remember'd how nicely I had wash'd & iron'd the blinds & put 'em up in the old house. But I was to have my tea directly, which Mary, the younger servant, got me, & then Miss K. went upstairs again. I noticed that she was dress'd only in a plain cotton dress – it wasn't a *lilac* print but a red & white plaid. I was to sleep with Mary & our bed was in the kitchen & shut up in the daytime, but Miss K. said she would like me to sleep in the room next the kitchen till

lodgers came, to air the room as well as to be more comfortable for me. I found it a nice little kitchen with a big window looking into the back yard with a bit of rough garden. A washhouse or scullery with a pump in it led out of the kitchen & the house was 4 storeys high with bow windows in front. After my tea Miss K. show'd me the rooms which were very tastefully furnish'd – a drawing room floor, a dining room floor & the attics besides the room next to the kitchen to let. Miss K. even told me the rent of the house, & how much she wish'd she had eight hundred pounds to buy it out & out – it was 50 lbs [£50] a year. I made a curtsy to Miss K. when she came to me & I dare say she thought of the first time I saw her at Mrs Eastlands where I was lodging & she came up after me.

I came down third class of course, & left my old hair box at Mrs Smith's.[6] Miss K. agree'd with me to give me at the rate of 12 lbs [£12] a year, & then of course I was to keep what might be given me by the lodgers. At 9 o'clock we went up to prayers at the top o' the house where Miss Knight the invalid is – she shook hands with me. I sat next the door as I used to & Miss Julia read, & wishing both of us servants good night we came down to bed. I slept with Mary for company the first night, & slept soundly too for [all] it was only a straw bed – the straw cut up short. I soon got friends with Mary & on the whole she was a good fellow servant. I suppose Miss Knight the Missis had spoked well of me to her for she treated me respectfully for a fellow servant. In time she trusted me with the account of her sweetheart, & I felt sorry I couldn't be as open with her about mine. Miss K. hoped to have lodgers soon, & I wish'd it as much as she did I dare say for I didn't like living upon her with nothing coming in.

We settled about the work. I was to be the downstairs servant & to cook & fetch errands & to wait on the bottom floor lodgers' eating & to undertake the rest if Mary was out. Till the lodgers came I was to clean the house & do anything. I found it cold & windy when I got out o' the train at Margate, for it was quite early in spring & I'd a long walk to that end o' the town & to a new house was a

bit strange. But still it was like going *home* compar'd with the first of my going to Margate when I knew not a soul, nor even where I shd lodge. This time I slept well in the old turn-up straw bed in the kitchen, after thinking about Massa & how pleas'd he would be to get my letters about my work again in the *nice* lodging house. So different to the one I had just left, for London houses are very different to the country ones, & where the Missis *is* a lady it's like a *security*.

As I said, my only wish to try & stop in Craven Street was because it was so near to M. & I'd been so many years in service I thought I could afford to risk the loss of character for a gentleman's family again. [And] as M. wish'd me to be so low I felt that I would even be a crossing sweeper to please him, so long as I'd saved enough to be independent of service, & by this time I had a nice bit in the savings bank. In Craven Street I never had to be seen upstairs or to wait on any lodgers, because there was two waitresses, & a young lady in partnership with Mrs Bishop, so my work was downstairs. I thought it a chance for dressing as rough & bein' as black in my work as I could be, & so when I shook the mats in the street of a morning I am sure I was the *blackest* servant in the street of all the lodging house servants.

When I once went to Massa in my dirt with striped apron on & dirty frock on purpose that he may see *how* dirty I got, he was, I think, disgusted. My face was dirty (I'd been cleaning the dirty scullery out) & my arms black'd & my *hands* look'd swell'd & red, & begrimed with dirt – *grener'd* as we say in Shropshire. That is, the cracks in our hands ingrain'd with black lead & that, so that even scrubbing will not fetch it out, & in cold frosty weather one *dare* not brush them. I had not worn gloves for years then, not even to see ladies in, so I was without gloves to see the lady at Mr Clark's that day. I saw Mrs Green & her daughter look *hard* at my red hands.

Well, I was a little hurt & thought Massa was changed this evening that I went so dirty – after telling me to come in my dirt to his chambers – for he told me to take my

thick apron off & to wash myself. It seems he began to think I *was too low* & degraded & that he really pitied me. I could hardly understand that in him, after he had learnt me to love the lowest work[7] & to give up wanting to be anything higher, & never teaching me nothing, nor for years have I read any books & my only practice in writing has been my diary, & letters to M. & to my sisters.

Well, next morning I got up & put my servant's dress on – my big cap & apron that Miss K. likes so much & cotton frock & I am pleas'd that she likes what Massa & I do.

She told me once that the first time she saw me at Mrs Eastlands where I was lodging & at work, that she thought she never saw such a nice-looking *servant*. That pleas'd me very much of course, & I told her how that I could tell *she* was a *lady* directly she spoke to me. And so we complemented one another, she for being a lady, & me for being a servant. I lighted the fire & clean'd the grate & got the kettles ready for the hot bottles to go up to Miss K. the invalid & then the breakfast ready. Swept the hall & clean'd the door steps, & shook the mats – dusted the dining room & about ten o'clock the Missis read prayers in the kitchen.

She had a long talk with me about my last place, at St Leonards I mean, & about other things, & she set me to work upstairs. But I was to get the dinner ready, & she was so much pleas'd, she said, that I was come to take that job from *her*.

3 Weeks went on or more. The weather was fine but cold, & *no* lodgers came. I had clean'd all the house down on my hands & knees. [I] laid the stair carpets & polish'd the furniture & got the curtains up, & work'd out in the back garden when it was fine enough – setting potatoes & things as well as some flowers, for it was a new place & never bin laid out, so I dug it all up first.

And I began to feel very anxious for lodgers to come that we may have work & to bring money in. My wages was to be 5 shillings a week, & the Missis couldn't well afford to keep me, I knew, & her paying 50 lbs [£50] a year for rent. It made her low-spirited & me too, & I began to feel

like *idle* & not worth my keep, what I hate, & I never felt that afore in any place, being always full o' work. Then a way came into my head to get lodgers for I thought the house perhaps was too much out o' the way. But I didn't tell Missis, 'cause she wouldn't like it, being a *lady*, tho' poor. When I got out for my walk, & Miss K. let me go as before when I liked, I clean'd me & went out in my apron & plaid shawl & walk'd about. When I saw people I thought looking for lodgings, I spoke to them & said there was good apartments at 17 Athelstan Road if they wanted any, & I was servant there if they'd please let me show them to the house. I hardly liked doing so, but it was entirely from feeling for the Missis. Some spoke short to me & others would not at all, so I thought perhaps after all it wasn't prudent, & that lodgers would come in time, no doubt.

I used to go to the Crown & Anchor for Missis's beer & my own & for the lodgers too when they wanted it. It's the inn Massa stay'd at once, & the Missis there used to notice me sometimes. I had often to wait while other customers were served, but once when few or none was in the bar she spoke to me. I had my green plaid shawl & cotton frock on – my old black straw bonnet & white cap in it – striped petticoat, & clean apron & bare arms which was clean & my face too. She spoke afore the barmaid, & said, 'Why, you look a healthy country young woman, & I've often noticed you; where do you live & what part do you come from?' I said, 'I am hired to live with Miss Knight, a lady at 17 Athelstan Road, for the summer and I came from London. The change of place does me good 'cause I've been with that lady afore at Union Crescent in Margate. *Then* it was a boarding house & now is call'd a *lodging* house, but the only difference is that there's separate meals.' She said, 'What *arms* you've got!' I said, 'Why yes, ma'am, I'm pretty strong, & it does me good to fetch the beer in the fresh bracing wind.' She said, 'I like the looks of you – you look honest & strong. I like your face too,' she says, '& I wish I had you for a servant &, mind, if ever you want work or a place again at Margate, come to *me*, & I'll

prayers every night, & in a morning Miss Julia knelt in the kitchen with us. One day she ask'd me to go up & clean the grate & fender & irons in the room, & I was pleas'd, 'cause it show'd she thought I was ready & willing for it, & so I was. I was told what time I may go up & it was about 3 o'clock after the dinner was over & Miss K. was awake & able to bear it.

The day was *very* hot & so I sweated more nor usual, & being look'd at too all the time by the ladies made me still hotter. I thought I would show them how Massa likes me to clean a grate & I ventured to rub the bars with my bare hands, & yet I was afear'd they may think it a dirty way. But, instead, the Miss Knight in bed watch'd me, & spoke quite pleasantly, & when she saw I wanted more wet said, 'Come here, Hannah, I'll wet your hand for you out of my bottle.' I had taken care to get my arms black & I rubb'd them across my face, & having my striped apron on & frock pinn'd up, you may guess how I look'd as I crawl'd on my knees to & from the bedside & holding my hand up for the water. [Her] been so delicate, as white as a lily & her face too, from been in bed so many years, & I suppose never soil'd her fingers ever, except perhaps with a dirty book or paper, & the white coverlet & all standing out against my dirty black hands, & my *big* red & black arms, & my face red too & sweating till the drops tumbled off, or stood on little drops o' crystal again the greasy black.

I wish'd much that M. could see me for I knew he would o' liked to see me so, & have loved me the more for it. But still I was satisfied that I was doing it for him & I could give him a nice account of it in writing. It's to make my hands harder inside why I rub the brass with them whenever I can. It's anything but a pleasant feeling except that it's to make them more fit for M. to admire, for he likes a working woman's hand to be big & hard. The ladies seem'd pleas'd wi' the way I clean'd & polish'd all the grate & things, for Miss Julia *thank'd* me when I'd done, & ask'd me to carry the kettle down. I said, 'Yes, ma'am' & I made a little curtsy as I left the room.

As I stood up loaded with black lead brushes & rags in

my arms, & the kettle too, I wonder what the invalid thought of me. Yet I think she liked me from what Miss J. told me that she herself thought the first time she see me at Mrs Eastlands how that she thought me the best-looking servant she ever saw, & that her sister said I was very different to servants in general, not at all *common*. And Miss Knight the invalid I always thought *proud* really, & except for her shaking hands wi' me this last time I should never o' believed from *seeing* her that she liked me at all, tho' she always had me up to wheel her from one room to another when she was well enough to be moved. From her way of speaking to a servant, & the curious headdress she wore, you'd think she was a lady from India, & one dare not make a sound of any sort near her room, nor a sweeping the stairs & that & so it made one nearly dread her.

Their father was an officer, & anyone could tell they was ladies, & one o' their brothers is a doctor, & so Miss J. used to tell me a good deal of what she had learned of him. She was even trustful enough to tell me some of her past history, & what trouble she had through *loving* & warn'd me again it, for she said there was no man worth a woman's love. But said I hoped there *was* one, & that she didn't know 'em all. I took it kind of her to talk so to me, & I felt sorry for her too.

At Whitsuntide we had no lodgers in the house, & I had thought how much I shd like Massa to come & stay in the room next the kitchen – that I may wait on him & also for him to see me as a lodging house servant & to see my Missis & the house I lived in – if only it could be managed not to cause suspicion. And so M. agree'd to come on the Saturday & to stay till Whit Monday evening. I took care to air the bed, but of course it was to come all unawares & I was all anxiety to hear the front door bell ring about six in the evening of Saturday.

I was at work in the garden & Mary had leave to go out, but succeeded so far as to keep her with me till the bell rang. She says, 'Can't you answer that, Hannah, as I've got my bonnet on?' I said, 'I'm not fit wi' these black hands, besides it might be people for lodgings and then you

must take your things off.' And Mary went up & let the gentleman into the dining room, & then went up for Missis to come & speak to him. I still kept at work til she came running to me & says, 'You was right, Hannah, but it's only one & that a gentleman, & *such* a swell with a beard & mastachios, & Missis has took him up to see the rooms.' I said, 'Oh, let's go in then, & stir the kitchen fire up - I hope he'll want some dinner or tea or something.' By the time we got in the kitchen I could hear Massa's voice, & that Missis was with him in the next room, & I felt so overjoy'd you canna tell, but I was forced to pretend anything else but the right cause. In a minute or so Missis came in & said, 'Hannah, a gentleman has come to stay in the next room for a night or two & he wants some dinner, so *you* go in & tell him what you can get & I'll put the sheets out for airing,' & really Miss K. seem'd as confused as could be. I laugh'd to myself when I said, 'Very well, ma'am,' & I went & knock'd once at the door & walk'd in, & there was Massa!

I made him a curtsy & said, 'Yes, sir,' pretty loud & then put the door to but of course didn't shut it. Then I *think* I went up & he kiss'd me quickly & then spoke louder about his dinner, giving me ½ a sovereign to get what I thought best, & came out again & told Miss K. & Mary what I was going out for. Missis seem'd pleas'd at me managing it all myself & so went upstairs. I put on my bonnet & shawl & took a basket to fetch the things, & I ask'd Mary to lay the cloth in the next room for me the while I was away. You may be sure I wasn't long a-going to the butcher's & fishmonger's, but I was soon back again & got a nice little dinner for M., fish, cutlets, & an omelette. I thought it was best to let Mary wait on him the first night, anyhow at dinner, to save anything been thought - only as that was my room to wait on I didn't give it up, & so I lighted the fire & took coals in, & Mary *did* go out as she'd got leave for it - after the dinner was over, & Missis was safe upstairs at reading as she always did with her sister of an evening, & so *then* I went in & had a petting with Massa & talk'd about things. It was delightfully amusing altogether, for our having such a grand lodger at Margate was quite a new thing that even the Missis seem'd pleas'd, for she said, 'He's *quite* a gentleman,' & I thought, 'Yes, ma'am, *I* could tell you that.' And Mary was pleas'd too, and every time she come out o' the room at dinner time she had something fresh to tell me, & *I* listened eagerly & talk'd again & I wonder'd however he came to pick *our* house out from the rest. And so it was quite a bit o' new life for us, & there was no other lodgers in the house either. When Mary came in M. was out for a walk, which was good, & so I went in & got the tea ready, & put the bed ready & the candles & everything, so that I could easily go again last thing for *orders*, & just for the good-night *kiss*. And Mary & me slept together on our bed in the kitchen & M. told me after he could hear us talking & laughing very happy like.

I ask'd Mary to call him next morning, but I got the breakfast ready, & first thing I went in my dirt to do the grate up, & light the fire. I had a dirty face, & my arms was black too, on purpose for M. to see me as he had wish'd to, a-lighting a fire of a morning. I wore my striped apron, & Massa sat in bed to look at me do my work, & when I'd done he call'd me to him for a kiss. And I brought his boots out with me & clean'd 'em - after that I wash'd me & got the breakfast ready. Miss Julia went to church & Mary's turn out was in the morning too, so I was left alone with M. The Missis having said how glad she was *I* was there, for a younger person she could hardly have trusted, but she was not the least afraid of me being alone in the house. I said, 'I've not the least fear, ma'am, not of anyone as regards that.' She said, 'Oh, no, but I shd be afraid of some.' And so I clean'd away & did all in the room as was wanted, & I show'd Massa the kitchen & the scullery I work'd in & everything, & before the Missis & Mary came back he was gone out, after appointing where abouts to meet me in the afternoon.

And as soon as I'd clean'd away & made the fire up & that I put my things on & went out, taking some lunch in a bag for M. and we met along the cliff out o' sight of the

but left the lady to consider it & to settle it with the Master, & I was to go again. I did so, & waited in the drawing room, & when the lady came in I got up & curtsied to her. She sat down, & she said, 'There's one thing Mr — will not allow & that is staying out after church time on Sundays, & we cannot give you any stated time on weekdays.' I said, 'I must give it up then, ma'am.' She said, 'Why?' 'Because, ma'am, I don't like being compelled to go to church, & to feel I dare not stop out if I wanted to nor never one evening in the week.' I was turning away to go, but she told me to wait & think it over – I said, 'No, ma'am, I must give it up, thank you,' & I made a curtsy & come away. When I got outside & in the park I actually jump'd for joy & felt as if I was let out o' prison. The feeling is dreadful – that being stuck in a drawing room & having a fussy fine lady talking to you. I'd leifer work for £8 a year with comfort – only I don't feel satisfied wi' that 'cause you canna lay by for a rainy day out of it.

The other place was at Mrs Redmayne's in Gloucester Gardens. I like'd the manner of Mrs R. much better. She didn't talk so proudly, & I knew the Master was a linen draper, & I wasn't so much afraid o' the place altogether, & there was no restrictions about Sunday or church-going. But the new servant wasn't wanted till the end of the year. I agreed to wait for the place, & give myself a holiday at Mrs Smith's. I hardly need say how much I enjoy'd it too, sewing & working, & cooking & going to Massa's & knowing all the time I'd a place to go to after all. Miss Knight gave me an excellent character, so Mrs Redmayne told me. After Christmas week I went to it – I found it a *hard* place, but a *good* one on the whole. After being there 3 months Master was order'd to go abroad for a year & we servants all got warning to leave. I was much vex'd at it, but it couldn't be help'd & I reluctantly went after places.

Mr Skates said I clean'd his boots well at Margate, & I had his meals all ready to his time & waited on him & his little girl well. [That was] why he wanted me for his servant I think, but especially he seem'd to like the dinners I got him, for he said, 'You cook everything so *nicely*, Hannah.'

Of course I was pleas'd at him praising me as been a good useful servant, for I somehow never got much praise in service. I was always treated more harsh like by the ladies & envious like from fellow servants or *spitefully*. I've thought it was from me being so much taller & stronger nor them & me not minding what work I did, & never caring to be drest up myself & for saving my wages more than they did.

I think it was nigh the end of October when I left Margate. It was dark soon of evenings & begun to be very cold, & for some weeks we was not busy, so many lodgers having gone. Massa told me to go & have my likeness done in my dirt & so I found Mr Stodart & had bin to him off & on for 2 or 3 weeks & as I'd time, & when he was disengaged. He's the best likeness-taker in Margate & his shop's not far from Miss Knight's in Athelstan Road – on the fort. I was respectful to him always, for I mostly went in my dirt. I told him I was servant in a lodging house in Athelstan Road & after once or twice going Mr S. was quite civil & his father & sisters & all talk'd to me quite freely. I was glad of it 'cause I didn't mind how black I went, & I felt they would excuse me & think none the worse of me for it. So I went one morning just as I was, but he was busy & the second time I went he let me in. I had slipp'd out without asking leave afore the lodgers' breakfast, & I was partly black wi' cleaning boots & grates & that. I had a dirty lilac frock on & old boots, & a coarse white apron on & my striped one wi' me, & of course a cap on. My hands was quite black & my face & arms grimed, but I put a good patch o' black lead on my left arm to do 'em more with.

No one noticed me much in the streets, I think, & I got to Mr Stodart's & he took me up to the room smiling & said, 'Well, you *are* dirty.' But I said, 'Oh no, sir, this is only what I am every day, but I want to be done thoroughly black like I am sometimes at work.' And I show'd him what the patch of black lead was for, me spitting on it & then daubing it on my arms & after all drawing them across my mouth & nose. He stood looking on & seem'd surprised, but said, 'Very well, & what position do you

think?' He said, 'You have made a pretty chimney sweep of yourself,' & I said, 'Just what I wanted. I don't care how black it comes out & the rougher-looking the better.' So I was took – cleaning a pair o' boots in one & another like blacking the grate.

Mr S. was kind & civil & didn't order me about much, only treated me as any other servant. But when I went for the pictures, as he said, they wasn't ½ so black as I was really, & I was disappointed. And Mr S. [said] to come out black I shd be rubb'd wi' *yellow*. Mr S. put one o' the pictures in the window for show, & when Massa came I took him to see it, and my sister Polly too. I was clean'd when I fetch'd them, & Mr S. seem'd pleas'd with me & said, 'You're a fine strong girl & you've such big arms I don't know such another servant in Margate.' He call'd his mother to see me, & he said, 'We shall be wanting a servant soon, & this young woman is leaving her place soon at Miss Knight's. I wonder if we could bargain with her to come & live here.' But I thank'd him [&] said I must go to London when I left.

And then the young man said he should like to take me again in other ways & that he wasn't so busy now if I could come – one to be done as *Magdalene*, & I shd want nothing to wear but a white skirt. Massa said that Mr Fink (the one as took me for him in London once) wanted me to be done as *Una* – what that is I hardly know.[11] Well, I went again & was done. I had to strip off my servant's things – to my shift, what I hardly liked, but still I knew there was no *harm* in that, & Mr S. was a serious sort o' man & we neither of us laugh'd or smil'd over it. He took me in a kneeling position as if praying, with my hair down my back & looking up. The side face was good for it, but the *hands* was too big & coarse he said, so it wouldn't do as a picture. And so it's best for me to be done as a drudge what I am, for my hands & arms are tho' chief to *me*, to get my living with, & I don't care about my face if Massa likes it.

But Mr S. gave me one or two of the Magdalenes on cards & I was to go again afore I left. And I did so two or 3 times, for as well as being an artist there was a bazaar of all

kinds o' things what the daughters minded, & I bought several things to take back to London with me. I think Mr Stodart & his sisters respected me at last, for all I had only show'd myself as a real drudge & common servant, & it was to be expected that he would say (as he did), 'Come early in the morning when you want to be done,' – 'cause of the ladies or gentlemen been there later in the day, & his telling me to sit on the floor in the studio while I waited or anything.

When I was stripp'd for the Magdalene I was a little confused, having my steel chain & padlock round my neck, for Mr S. said, 'Oh take that chain off.' I said, 'I canna, sir.' He said, 'Is it lock'd?' I blush'd a bit as I said, 'Yes, & I've not got the key.' 'Ah, there's some mystery about that,' he said. And so it was done wi' the chain on, but as I said the hands was too big, & the position too stiff to look well. But I kep' the cards he gave me, & he also gave me a likeness of himself in colours, & he's exceedingly good-looking I think, & I've put him in my album. I paid Mr S. a good bit for pictures, having 3 or 4 different ones. I was getting at the rate of 12 lbs [£12] a year of the Misses, & then I had a good bit give me from the lodgers. There was one family – Mr & Mrs Brown – 3 children & two nurses stay'd a month. I clean'd all their boots, servants & all, & I had 7 shillings of them when they left, & Mrs B. said how well we had done for them, & hoped to see me again another time.

I dare say their servants despised us for been lodging house servants rather than having pity for us. I know the difference of all sorts o' places tho', & I'd leifer live in a lodging house for most things. The only thing is it's not being so *sure* of regular wages for saving, & your being drove too hard when the house is over full in the season. But on the whole I never so *enjoy'd* myself as I have both times I've bin servant to Miss Knight at Margate & I've bin quite comfortable wi' lying on the shut-up straw or chaff bed in the kitchen, & in our busy times being up at 12 o' a Saturday night making a clean cap up or ironing my cotton frock for Sunday. For I only brought two cottons

out I made another & said, 'It's evident that Gower & Harriet have done what they could to injure me, but I will leave it alone' & I come away.

A morning or two before that, at breakfast in the kitchen, the housemaid Harriet said something to me before the others pointing most clearly at me about leading a wicked life with somebody. I had a knife in my hand & said, '*Harriet*, you've said enough to me now to make me put this knife into *you*,' & 'How *dare* you say as much to me.' And I look'd firmly at her, but never offer'd to go near her & *she* had said that I *threaten'd* her. And that the Master told me of, & I told him what I said to her.

I never spoke again to either Gower or Harriet. She left before I did & Mrs S. paid her & never said good-bye to her. Gower left soon after, & I heard that he had an illness all the following winter & was obliged to ask for help, & he was a great lusty man over twelve stone.

Massa seem'd sorry I was not going to the island to live, saying it was no further than St Leonard's where I lived. But I think it was a blessing I didn't, for I couldn't have gone on again away from him and ~~especially~~ as an upper ~~servant,~~ for they is so opposite to anything he ever loved ~~me for.~~ I was got so tired of changing places, & also of that continual worry of writing to M. & in fear lest anybody shd know who I wrote to, & yet finding it so hard to keep the secret, that I really began to feel so long loving was irksome & tiresome, especially us not being equals.

The morning after I had seen the Master Mrs S. came down as usual, but she begun to cry & said how sorry she was for me to go away. I said, 'I am sorry too, ma'am in one way but I think it's *best*.' She told me Harriet was not going with them, nor Ann either, but she said, 'I shall always respect *you* & I wish you well.'

And so time went on and I had to think about getting another place. This was the first time I'd tried a bettermost sort, & the first time I got such high wages – 22 lbs [£22] with all found. Still I saw it was no use me trying for another. Indeed it was only nonsense for me, after being used to the lowest only, & M. teaching me to love rough

~~dirty work.~~ This one place was quite enough, & so I resolved to go where only one was kept in the kitchen. And so this was the beginning & the end of me trying to be an upper servant. I had cleaner hands & face, & wore cleaner ~~frocks~~ & aprons & had a kitchenmaid to do the dirty work for me & all that, but I dislike the thought of being over anybody & ordering things, not only 'cause ~~I'd rather~~ do the work myself but for fear anyone shd think me set up or ~~proud.~~ No, I've long resolved in my own mind & felt that, ~~for freedom & true lowliness, there's nothing like~~ being a maid of all work. No one can think you set up or proud in that, & I'd leifer be despised than cause spite or envy from my fellow servants. And I would leifer do all the scrubbing both out o' doors & in, wearing my thick striped apron, peasant's bonnet, short frock & thick boots – having black arms & hands, & face too if it happens with soot or dust, than I'd be prim & clean in the kitchen looking on at anyone else doing the work I've bin so used to & liked for this 30 year. And as I once said to Massa, 'I was *born* to *serve*, & *not* to order,' and I hope I shall always keep the same humble spirit – ~~that of *liking*~~ to serve others, & obeying instead of commanding.

On 16 July 1868 I went to live at Mrs Henderson's in Sunderland Square. They are small houses, & there was only the housemaid & a boy kept besides me. I was lucky enough to hear of the place a fortnight before I left Mr Sanders's. The greengrocer's wife told me of it, & so in the dinner hour one day I went after it – in my black bonnet & white apron with a black shawl over my very old-fashion'd cotton frock – the frock Massa likes so much for its beautiful old-fashion'd flowers & pretty lilac colours, & white ground. Emily the housemaid open'd the door to me & put me in the dining room to wait. I look'd round & saw so many family pictures in oil that I concluded it was a *good* family tho' none of the ladies look'd pretty, & Miss Henderson who came to speak to me I saw was one of them. I curtsied to her – she was pleasant – ask'd me the usual questions – 'Where have you lived? Why are you leaving? & What wages do you want, & what sort of a cook

1863: GENERAL SERVANT AT KILBURN

1863 - GENERAL SERVANT AT KILBURN (excerpts)

about a trifle, & she begun to cry, but I only said what I ought to her so I didn't humble too far. I clean'd the kitchen & passage. Had tea. Made a rabbit pie for supper, & Massa came after 7. I went out to him & walk'd up the road together. I was in my dirt, but he said I wasn't black enough. I was glad to see Massa up here. I had to get back 'cause of the supper. Wash'd up in the scullery & to bed at 11.

Sunday 18 January I lit the fires & did the hearths up. Clean'd 3 pairs o' boots (with Massa's in the evening). Swept & dusted the room. Laid the cloth & took breakfast up by nine – but the children had theirs in the parlour, so Sarah waited on 'em all, & I was glad to keep out as that strange gentleman was there.[9] I clean'd away when they was gone into the drawing room & wash'd up the things. Sarah help'd me to wipe up. I clean'd the knives & wash'd up in the scullery. There was only roast beef for dinner & that I put down at ten, so I wasn't busy with cooking. Massa sent me a note to say he should go away if he didn't get my diary a Saturday night, & I had only written a letter to him so I didn't know about going to his place or to Mrs Smith's. But at 4 o'clock I thought I'd go & *see* if he was at home so I started off when I'd put the supper ready & put away all the dinner things. I thought he'd sure to be there & so I found him. Confidence is a great thing, & I felt he'd stop for me & I thought he would feel I should be sure to go – so we had a very nice evening & we added the boots up. I got the dinner & wash'd up after. Wash'd Massa's feet & clean'd his boots, put coal on & then made cigars & had a little reading. At nine I came away – promising to send the diary soon as possible. I got home by ten, & then I had supper & went to bed at 11.

Monday 19 January Lighted the fires & clean'd the hearths. Clean'd 2 pair of boots. Swept & dusted the rooms. Laid the cloth & took the breakfast up. Clean'd away after & wash'd up the things. Put the linen ready for the wash. Wash'd up the dishes & clean'd the knives. Fill'd the

scuttles & made the fires up. Got the dinner ready. Clean'd the things away after & clean'd the hearths. Master Teddy ask'd me to go for a walk with him so I left the washing up & put on my bonnet & shawl & went with him from ½ past 3 till five o'clock. I was much pleased with the walk & the pictures & things in the window – Teddy took me just where he liked & I didn't know a bit where I was. We went in a shop & bought some of the dun drey pictures, & I lent Teddy 2d to buy some of his widdles.[10] We got home by 5 – Miss Jessie look'd ashamed of me having gone out with her brother in such a shabby bonnet & cotton frock. I wash'd up after tea. Got the supper. Wrote my diary after & to bed.

Thursday 22 January I lit the fires & clean'd the hearths. Clean'd a pair of boots. Swept & dusted the room. Laid the cloth & took the breakfast up. Got the orders. Made the fires up & fill'd the scuttles. Clean'd & wash'd the breakfast things. Clean'd the knives & wash'd all the ink stands & bottles. Made the fires up & got the dinner ready. The Master & Missis & young ladies went out in the evening, so I clean'd up in the kitchen & scullery & after tea I had a game with the boys upstairs. Mary was going out else I meant to 'a' gone & seen the pantomime at the Marylebone Theatre. She ask'd leave to, & only for 2 hours & Sarah told me the Missis knew I was out last night somehow, so I daren't of gone out again tonight if Mary hadn't 'a' gone. But *I* should never ask leave – I'd rather stop in than do that – unless I wanted a holiday, & that I never do. I went out for the children's supper & got a lobster. After supper I clean'd away & went to bed.

Tuesday 24 February Lighted the fires & clean'd the hearths. Clean'd no boots. Swept & dusted the dining room. Wash'd myself & got the breakfast up. Clean'd away after & wash'd up. Got a letter to say my Aunt Ellen was dead. I expected it quite, for a dog came in yesterday morning and howl'd piteously. I couldn't help crying, & feeling it, for she is my mother's sister & has been kind to me always – I

gentlemen's boots down. Bill ask'd me who valeted so I said, 'Me of course, I'm a first-rate shoe-black.' So he said he knew I didn't mind what I did, but he wish'd he lived next door & then he'd (black) em for me, but I told him I shouldn't let him if he did. I clean'd away the supper & to bed.

Monday 25 May I clean'd 3 pairs of boots & lit the fires. Clean'd the hearths. Swept & dusted the room & clean'd the steps. Got the breakfast up. Clean'd away & wash'd up the things. Mr & Mrs Fuller went away & so I scour'd up all the saucepans & lids & things in the scullery & cleaned the kitchen floor & tables, so as to leave everything as clean as I could. Pack'd the kitchen hamper up when the dinner was over – they had the cold beef so I'd no cooking to do. Wash'd up in the scullery & had my tea & then I went round to the tradespeople. Mr Caffin the butcher says, 'Are you Mr Foster's servant?' & I said, 'Yes, sir.' Then he says, 'I suppose you want some money for a bonnet ribbon,' & I said, 'If you please, sir,' & he give me five shillings. I made a kind of bob curtsy & thank'd him & come away. The others was more civil & said goodbye and Mr Hugget the grocer shook hands wi' me. I was a bit awkward a-holding my rough hand out over the counter, for I didn't expect he'd offer me his hand. I was lucky though for I got over two pounds altogether. I treated Mrs Walters to a new necktie & Ellen, my helper, a brooch & tie – & being my birthday tomorrow I bought myself a violet neck ribbon. I went home & sent the supper up. Bill came in with his young woman too, & I walk'd wi' them a little way. I kiss'd 'em both & said goodbye, & to bed at 11.

Tuesday 26 May ~~Woke up early & remember'd that I'd dreamt I was with Massa again~~ as usual.[14] One night afore I thought I was there hiding under the bed all in my dirty clothes & the housekeeper came up & saw me there. So I thought I'd better do something to show I was a servant, & so I set on & scrubb'd the dirty floor & the stairs, for it seem'd as if she thought I was a thief. Got up & lit the fires

& did the hearth up. Clean'd 5 pairs of boots. Got the breakfast ready & had mine. Pack'd up & corded my box & put it in the hall ready to go. Went over the inventory with the landlady. Wash'd the breakfast things up in the scullery. Got myself ready & up in the hall by ½ past ten. Said goodbye to Ellen & the neighbours & when the ladies was all got in the carriages we servants got in the bus wi' the boys & rode off to the station. We had a second class carriage & I enjoy'd the ride – talking wi' the young gentlemen at the windows all the way & looking out at the country, while Mary & Sarah sat with their eyes shut at the other end. There was a bus waiting for us at the Victoria Station & we all got inside. I carried what luggage they gave me but the Master look'd after all the big things. We rode through Hyde Park, & there was such a lot of proudly dress'd people – ~~some on horses & some ladies with their beautiful silk trailing quite ½ a yard on the ground~~, which I thought was disgracefully extravagant & ridiculous. We got on & the people seem'd to stare at us inside with such a heap o' luggage & things on the top of a private bus.

We got home by ½ past two. I carried the kitchen hampers down & my box. The woman had got a leg of mutton roasting & I took it up, but had to wash the dishes & plates 'fore I could send 'em up, for *everything* was terribly dirty. I felt uncomfortable wi' them women & the baby they'd got in the kitchen, so after our dinner I told the Missis it was my birthday & would she let me go out & she said, 'Yes,' and wish'd me happy returns & that. I thanked her too for the new frock she sent me down at Brighton by Miss Jessie. So I got ready & went to Massa, for I found a letter from him when I got in asking me to go if I could, & one from Mary my sister as well, wishing me the same good wishes for my birthday, & I got one from my sister Ellen too last night. Massa was surprised to see me, but glad. We clasp'd for a good while, & then I took my shawl off & he look'd at my arms & said they look'd fatter than he'd ever seen 'em, & he said how nice & brown & red my face was & all that, & he lik'd to see me again in my green shawl & black bonnet. I got the dinner ready & lit the fire. Took Massa's

boots off after I'd lick'd one of my own accord. Wash'd his feet & then made a few cigars. Clean'd away after dinner & wash'd up. And Massa talk'd to me about my 30th birthday & that nicely & we petted a bit & Massa told me to kneel with him by the table with my arm round him, & he pray'd for himself & me. We said the Lord's Prayer together & then got up & it was nearly ½ past 9 for I couldn't hurry away somehow. Massa came with me to the bus & I got home by ½ past ten. I was very tired & I went to bed.

Friday 29 May Mrs Wood came to clean for Mary at 7 o'clock. I lighted the fires & clean'd a pair o' boots. Went out & scrubb'd the doorsteps. They was glu'd wi' dirt & seem'd not to 'a' been touch'd since I did 'em, so I got splash'd well wi' sludge, & went in the kitchen red & dirty. Sarah said I was at my old game again & it served me right if the scurfy did come out, so I said it was my work & I didn't care. I took the breakfast up & wash'd up after. Fetch'd a cab for the master. The rest of the day as usually – cleaning knives & that. Wrote to my sister Mary & to bed at ten.

Sunday 31 May Clean'd 3 pairs o' boots & lit the fires. Did my hair & wash'd in the scullery. Laid the cloth & took the breakfast up. Clean'd away & wash'd up after. Clean'd the knives & made the kitchen fire up. Put the meat to roast. When dinner was over & I'd put the supper ready & clean'd the hearth & all that I got ready & went to Massa. Reach'd him earlyish & we had a nice evening. We petted a bit & then I put my jacket on, & Massa thought I was jolly & fat & he told me to see if I could lift *him* & I laugh'd & said, 'Of course I can.' I lifted him easy & carried him, & then he lifted me & said I was *heavy* – I am 11 stone & Massa's 13 lbs heavier than me. I got his dinner & clean'd away after & wash'd up. Made cigarettes & then petted & I told Massa things what had happened at Brighton & so he told me not to forget to put them things down what I'd bin telling him. So what I can remember I will, as there's room

in this sheet & it's end o' the month.

I came away from Massa at 9 & rode outside the bus. Got on at T. Court Road & soon after 3 young gentlemen (they thought themselves so I suppose) got on & very soon they began to jeer & joke me. But I was quite up to 'em but quite civil, & call'd 'em sir & all that, very quietly. The one by me said he'd been wassailing[15] [in] the West End & I ask'd him what ever that was but he didn't say. Then he said he must take his gloves off as he couldn't afford 3 & 6 every day so I said, 'You should be like me, sir, never wear any.' He said, 'Do you often get outside, young woman?' & I said I liked it best & I often did. The others with him got talking terrible slang & nasty talk, so I said, 'Just ask your friends to be quiet.' So he says to 'em, 'You're disgusting this young woman; *be* quiet.' Then he turn'd to me & said I must excuse 'em for they'd bin drinking *sherry*, & I said, 'Indeed,' why I thought none but *gentlemen* drank that. And a good deal more he said, & the one by me got his arm round, but I told him to take it to himself else I should *hurt* him perhaps, so he took it away. They rode down to Kilburn & when I got off the one said, 'Goodnight. I shall come & see *you*,' but I didn't answer. Came in & to bed.

Massa met me at the top of Chancery Lane today – walk'd down on the other side & sign'd to me to go in at the other gate. But the gentleman wouldn't let me through 'cause I wouldn't say who I was going to see, so I told him he could leave it alone, 'cause he made me cross, speaking like that. I am thirty years old this month – must be quite a woman now, though I don't feel any different than I ever did except in feeling lower in heart I think, for I've bin a servant now 20 years or more. Always the lowest kind, but I think differeiit about it now a good deal than I did ten years ago 'fore I knew Massa. He has taught me, though it's been difficult to learn thoroughly, the beauty in being nothing but a common drudge & to bear being despised by others what don't have to work the same way. I have hardly ever met wi' a *servant* yet who wasn't ashamed o' dirty work & who wouldn't be glad to get out of it for

something they think is *better*, but *I* wouldn't get out of it if I could, nor change from being Massa's slave for anything else I know of. I've bin a slave now 9 years & worn the chains & padlocks 6 years – I don't hide 'em now from Mary for she saw 'em every night at Brighton this time.

I was never out with her only she's ashamed of me & says I am dirty & don't dress respectable enough for a *gentleman's* servant, & Mrs Wood said one day, 'Such a smart looking wench as you are should dress *better*, & set yourself off to the best advantage,' but I only laugh'd at her. When I was on the race hill at Brighton that Monday a man we was talking to ask'd me if I was at Exeter wi' the Lancer's & I said, 'Oh no,' & he said I seem'd to know so much of 'em he thought perhaps I was a soldier's wife. I saw Bill the groom & went across to him just after that, but his lady was in the carriage a little on, & he couldn't notice me. I saw his master too & the other gentlemen after the races talking & drinking champagne.

I only went out one day at Brighton & that was to Worthing with Sarah. I was going to hear Chrystis Minstrels at the Pavilion one night 'cause I heard Mary say the young ladies was going, so I went in my white apron & cotton frock. I ask'd the policeman which was the way in, but he was quite rough & said he know'd nothing about them being there that night. The ladies I saw coming in so I walk'd away & straight home again, for I'd not ask'd leave & felt *rather* uncomfortable about it. The ladies went to the same man & Miss Jessie said he was quite polite to *them*, but it happen'd they'd made a mistake in the night, so I was lucky to get away as I did. I only have Bill to talk to at B. & Ralph the butler I walk'd with one night as I come out a church. I think he was half ashamed o' me for he never came to see me as he promised. I used to see some young ladies (Miss Perkins's) as I stood looking out in the area. They were so proud & would look so disdainfully down at me, & I was crawling on the steps cleaning 'em one day & I wish'd they might come by & see me but they did not, but some others did. I am glad to get back here to my black work again – [the same as]

there, but more cooking.

Sarah has given me some old boots of Miss Vereys & 4 pairs of the Master's old stockings & they fit me nicely – for my legs are pretty fat & big. Bill & Ralph think I'm looking well, & Bill didn't forget how I used to nurse him when his leg was broke at Henham, & how I sat by his bedside & read to him a bit, for he talk'd about it too all 3 times. I've read no books much since then I think – & that's getting on for 7 years. I told Massa how I kiss'd him once or twice at B. & all that. Bill was very sorry to see my hair cut off so, & I told him it had bin short a year or more – the scurf come on, I think through sweating so at my work & running to catch the bus on a Sunday night, but Massa says if it rotted away my nose *he* wouldn't care, neither should I so long as he loves me & I could get my own living, & it come through God's will.

I have cleaned 95 pairs o' boots this month, there was lots of gentlemen at Brighton – Mr Schmitts, the Mr Verys, Mr Atchisons, Mr Saundersons, Mr Grants, Mr Fullers, Dr Lorains & the boys & the Master's and others I can't remember now. My arm is 13¾ inches round the muscle & my hand 4½ inches across the inside, for Massa measured 'em. I went round begging o' the tradespeople as before & I got over 2 lbs [£2]. I *hardly* like asking 'em, but still it's degrading & I like that as well as for the money. There's lots o' ladies & gentlemen to be seen at Brighton all looking so gay & smartly dress'd. I used to see 'em from the area steps, & when I was out, but I certainly don't like to see such gayness, it's too worldly altogether. It seems quite another world to anything we're used to.

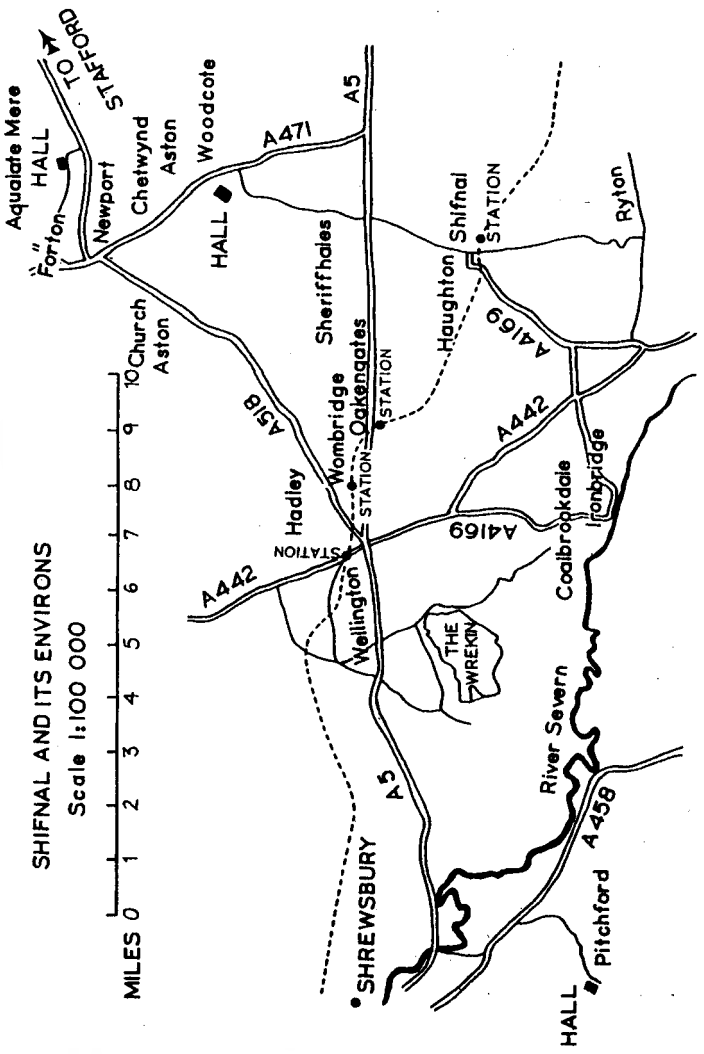
Massa often wishes I had to clean Mr Briket Foster's boots on his feet just for once or so. I saw him often at Brighton 'cause he lived in the Crescent, but he never slept here so I can't, else I should like it. My greatest pleasure in my work is when I can be dirty & go on without feeling I ought to be cooking or anything o' that sort, & that's not often the case cause I've so many sorts of work here – clean & dirty. It's a good while since I swept Massa's chimney & it's a good while since [I] lived servant at the Red

Lion – 20 years ago I think or more. I put how thick my arm was round the muscle & it's 10 & a ½ inches round thick below [the] elbow – 6 & ¾ round my wrist. My neck is 13½, so it's not so big as my arm – & Massa's muscle is but 13 & a half round. But I am fatter now than ever I was. My waist's 28 inches round.

Thursday 16 July Lit the fire & clean'd 3 pairs o' boots. Swept & did the dining room glasses & inside window. Laid the cloth & took the breakfast up. Clean'd & wash'd up the things. Clean'd the knives & made the fire up. Made the red currant jelly. Wash'd up in scullery after tea. Paper'd the pots over & put 'em away. Clean'd up after supper & to bed very tired. I ask'd the Missis this morning if I might have a week or ten days' holiday & she said yes – they start tomorrow for their summer trip.

Friday 17 July Got up early & lit the fire. Clean'd 3 pairs o' boots. Swept & dusted the room & got the breakfast up. They started at 9 o'clock. I got [up] & made the blk currant jam & jelly & did the other work I was obliged to. After tea I clean'd the saucepans & lids & some tins. Went out & order'd the sweep for tomorrow morning. Paper'd the jams over. I was up till 11 o'clock doing 'em & then to bed. Higgs the grocer's man came in today & Mary was in the kitchen. I got saying about when I used to drop 'tatoes for my father in the fields, & Mary didn't seem to know what I meant. When we told her she said, 'Did *you* ever drop *'tatoes* then?' & I said, 'Oh, yes & pick horse muck too in the roads,' & poor Mary walk'd off looking quite shock'd – to think I suppose that she was living wi' such a low body.

Tuesday 28 July Woke at 5 o'clock. Got up & dress'd myself. Open'd the shutters & lighted the kitchen fire & put the kettle on. Dick came at 7 & we had some breakfast & pack'd our things up in a carpet bag. Got off at a ¼ to eight & walk'd to the Paddington Station & got there 7 minutes past & we started 20 minutes past. Had a pleasant



some diary & got dinner. Clean'd away after & wash'd up. Got ready & went to M. Reach'd there ½ past 5 after I'd looked in some shop windows on the road. We spent a nice evening. M. kiss'd me & then I took off my things & put my jacket & apron on. Got the dinner & laid the cloth. Wash'd up after & then Massa's feet. Fetch'd the portmanteau out & bag & dusted 'em. Lit the lamp & then put M.'s things in as he give 'em me – had a little petting & at ½ past 9 we said goodbye, & I got home by ½ past ten. Had a bit of supper & sat thinking till past 11 about M. going away for six weeks & that perhaps he was going into Shropshire[23] where I'd just bin, & all that & then I went to bed.

Wednesday 14 October Clean'd 3 pair o' boots & lit the fires. Swept the steps & shook the mats. Got our breakfast & wash'd up after. Clean'd the knives & made the fire up & got dinner. Clean'd away after & got ready to go to Massa. Reach'd him 'fore 5 & we had a nice evening together. I told M. I was sorry about that Sunday[24] & he talk'd about it a little & then I was good again, & so Massa told me to black my face like it was that night I clean'd after the coalmen. So I did, & got the dinner & clean'd the boots & wash'd up the things & Massa's feet with it black, & M. seem'd pleas'd wi' it so but said my hands wasn't looking so thick & red as they did the Sunday when he read them verses to me. They was rhymes in the country talk & some o' the words I know'd how to speak better than Massa even. While I made the cigars I sat 'tween his knees & heard Massa read some verses he'd made up for me.[25] They was very nice & all just as I should o' said if I could o' made 'em, for they was wrote as if I was saying it, & I'd to kiss Massa at all the best parts – about going up the chimney & that. When the cigars was done I put coals on & had a little petting, for I'd wash'd the black of my face in the water I wash'd the feet in, & at ½ past 9 Massa walk'd wi' me up the lane & saw me get in an omnibus. I got home by ½ past ten & to bed.

Friday 16 October Got up & open'd the shutters. Got our breakfast over & wash'd up. Made the fire up & got dinner. Clean'd away & begun to scrub the tins & covers – Master Charley said I look'd like a milkmaid only blacker. Sarah took the boys to Bromley & Mary went out so Fred & me was alone.[26] I work'd till eight o'clock & then had supper. Clean'd away & then to bed at ten o'clock. I'd a capital chance to go up the chimney, so I lock'd up & waited till ½ past ten till the grate was cool enough & then I took the carpets up & got the tub o' water ready to wash me in. Moved the fender & swept ashes up. Stripp'd myself quite naked & put a pair of old boots on & tied an old duster over my hair & then I got up into the chimney with a brush. There was a lot o' soot & it was soft & warm. Before I swept I pull'd the duster over my eyes & mouth, & I sat on the beam that goes across the middle & cross'd my legs along it & I was quite safe & comfortable & out o' sight. I swept lots o' soot down & it come all over me & I sat there for ten minutes or more, & when I'd swept all round & as far as I could reach I come down, & I lay on the hearth in the soot a minute or two thinking, & I wish'd rather that Massa could see me. I black'd my face over & then got the looking glass & look'd at myself & I was certainly a fright & hideous all over, at least I should o' seem'd so to anybody but Massa. I set on & wash'd myself after, & I'd hard work to get the black off & was obliged to leave my shoulders for Massa to finish. I got the tub emptied & to bed before twelve.

Monday 19 October I lighted the fires but clean'd no boots. Had breakfast & wash'd up after. Put the dinner ready & cut some sandwiches to take wi' me. It was a fine morning & I met Massa at London Bridge at 10 minutes before 1 o'clock – we had to crush in the train, 'cause there was such a lot o' people going to Charlton Fair. Massa & me walk'd through it & I never saw such a thing before for I never was even at a country fair. I can't say I liked it though, there was such a drumming noise & to see the boats up in the air was something shocking. We walk'd

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Wednesday 28 June Got down afore 7 o'clock & open'd the shutters. Lighted the fire in the kitchen & clean'd the fender. Fill'd the box o' coal & took the ashes out. Swept & dusted the rooms & the hall. Lighted no fire in the dining room for the first time as it's warmer. Clean'd the front steps on my knees. Shook the mats. Wash'd me at the sink & brush'd my hair. Got our breakfast. To prayers at 9. Sent the breakft up & wash'd our things. Put straight in the larder. Swept the kitchen & clean'd the hearth on my knees. Dusted the potboard & put the plates on the dresser. Fill'd the boxes o' coal again & made the fire up for the morning. Had a nice quiet day with only one into lunch & no late dinner. They had tea at 7. I wrote two sheets o' diary & posted them with a note to M. afore I went to bed. Now Elizabeth's gone I have to carry the trays up to the doors for the lad, 'cause he's too young to be trusted with 'em either heavy or light, for fear of his slipping the glasses or tea things off. I'm not allow'd to go in for Miss M. says to me, 'Bring them up, to the door outside, but mind you're not seen.' I know she meant I am not fit to be seen by ladies, & I told Massa about it when he was sitting on my lap o' Sunday.

Then M kiss'd me & said, 'Oh dear, you're not fit to be seen by ladies as a *servant*, & however shall us two be seen together then?' I said, 'Ah, *indeed*, but there is one thing, Massa, I don't *want* anyone to see us.' I *like* the life I lead – working here & just going to M. when I can of a Sunday, & a chance time to clean of a weekday when I can get leave now & then, oftener of course if I could – better even I think than a married life. For I never feel as if I *could* make my mind up to that – it's too much like being a *woman*. Still I do think it's hard that the *world* shd so interfere & mar one's happiness if it chances to *know* of love 'twixt two different in station like we are. However it always *was* the way o' the world, & will be I reckon till it's levell'd, when the new earth is made. So let it be, only I don't wish the world to see *me* anything else nor a servant, but M.'s love I *couldn't* do without.

Monday 17 July Miss M. got the lodgings so now we've got to get ready for them to start. I shook my blankets & beat the mattresses of my bed, & help'd Emily with the others, lifted some boxes out o' the storeroom & put a lot o' things away, & Missis told me what she wanted done while she's away. I help'd W. to wash up in the pantry & to clean the silver. Did my own work as usual & to bed at ½ past 11.

Tuesday 18 July They went today at 5 o'clock, after dinner. I help'd with the luggage & was up & down stairs a good deal. Emily & William was took wi' them, & Missis give me & Walter [12] a pound each to find us for a fortnight, & he's to take the carpets all up & put 'em down again & I've to do all the cleaning. I put straight after they was off. W. went out & I did some sewing. Waited up for him till twelve o'clock, & to bed as soon as he come in after locking up.

Wednesday 19 July I got up early & turn'd my attic out. Swept it & the room Emily sleeps in. Clean'd my floor on my knees. Work'd till dinner time & after that I clean'd me & went to Mrs Smith's. Got there by 3 o'clock. Did a job of sewing for her & had tea & then to Massa, but somehow we hadn't a nice evening. He was moody, & hardly spoke to me & I got unhappy & sullen. I was there till 11 but did nothing extra, & so I was quite disappointed, but M. kiss'd me & said goodnight kindly at last, & I got here by a ¼ to 12.

Friday 28 July Got up & come down to the wretched-looking kitchen & I felt so sick & bad from so much dirt & hard work. I felt that I *couldn't* do any more till I'd bin out & forgot it a bit. So after our dinner Polly & I started & walk'd to the Exhibition – very slowly as if I hardly car'd whether I got there or no, but we reach'd it by 3 o'clock & went in. The organ was playing in the Albert Hall, but it sounded too loud & we come out again, & along the winding passages till we come inside o' the gardens & trees & flowers outside. I liked it directly & was *surprised* to find it

1872

yet, & I don't want you to be cast down, only I want to be a true friend as I always was & meant to be. And you always pretended to be so fond o' me, that I shd never o' judged you, but it was Mrs H. suspected you & I found it true by going to Mr Roger's, & I saw you with the cook's things. Why did you touch them, as you always seem'd to dislike her?' 'To be revenged on her,' C. said. I said then, 'Aren't you sorry now you took 'em?' 'No I'm not,' she said, & it made me angry with her, & I said, 'Then you *ought* to be, Clara, & you shall be, before I can think you're better minded.'

(1872)

And I said, 'Your deceit to me was worse nor thieving – for you seem'd so open & frank & almost as if you *loved* me,' & C. said, 'I *did* love you & I do now.' I was afraid she'd think me too harsh & get into an obstinate bad humour, a-giving up like, & so I got up, & put one arm round her neck & I said, 'Clara, you know all I say is for your good, & I want [you] to be better, & leave off all foolish extravagant ways. You ~~know you bought trumpery~~ fine things what I never want nor you either & the money'd bin as well in the street. But don't give up – be good, & I'll do what I can wi' the Missis to speak for you,' & I sat down again.

The father & brother all the while had listen'd but never spoke, which I thought look'd wise & after I sat down I ax'd the old man to speak to her. He begun in broken English, but I said, 'Hadn't you better speak in German? You'll speak freer, & I shan't know what you say.' So he did. And very soon I begun to move as it was late, & the old man said, 'Then you will not bring her to the court.' I said, *'Oh dear no* ,but I expect Clara to give me things to hold till she can pay me the money.' And C. says, 'You can take all there is.' I said, 'No I shall take nothing, you give me what you think is enough.' So she gave me the case o' jewels, that's the brooch & ear-rings what she give 3 lbs [£3] ten for, & 2 o' the grand nightgowns & shifts what she gave ten shillings for she said. So I took 'em at the price.

Clara came with me to the omnibus, seeming either

solemn or sorry, I couldn't feel sure which, & I wish'd her goodbye. It was late but I went to Mrs Smith's & left the parcel there, had my tea & told 'em all about the day, & then I went back to my place. I show'd the jewellery to Miss O. & told her about it all. I'd nothing much to do in the time after so I wrote a letter to Mrs Henderson asking her to do what she could for Clara & telling her how she seem'd sorry & that. I wrote a letter to my sister Ellen, & one to Massa, & then I was tired & soon went to bed – feeling oh *so* glad the day was over what I dreaded so.

Tuesday 16 April First thing this morning I got a letter from Clara, saying she was so cut up yesterday she hadn't said half to me as she wanted, & when would I see her again. I wrote back to say I daren't ax her to the house, & as I'd bin out so much I couldn't ax to get out. So I couldn't tell *when* I could see her but would the first chance. I did some washing today & several jobs o' cleaning downstairs. Help'd to make Miss Otway's bed & do upstairs.

Wednesday 24 April I did my usual work, cleaning the dining room grate & sweeping the floor, the steps on my knees & the stairs too, & I wash'd out the druggeting & put it to dry & got our dinner at twelve o'clock. Massa has told me to get leave & go to the hospital again.[13] He was so anxious about me losing a stone & a ½ & seeming weak to what I was, tho I can still lift him easy. It's the King's College Hospital, & lots of other poor folks go & sit to wait, on Wednesdays & Saturdays. But me having a letter o' recommendation I get up sooner nor the rest that haven't. I didn't ax leave, I didn't like to, but I hasten'd off in my dinner hour, & I met Massa at the Charing Cross pier as he told me, & went with him in the boat. But I was asham'd to go ~~with him I was so shabby,~~ for I'd my old milkwoman's bonnet on & grey cloak, & my ragged cotton frock & apron, & my boots all worn. M. was angry wi' me not putting his strong ones on what he gave me, which I wear for outdoor work & wet weather, & my bare hands

look'd rough & black-lined with dirty work. But M. sat beside me in the boat & talk'd, & the fresh air & the view was pleasant after the cellar kitchen where I live, and so we went on to the hospital. I ~~wouldn't walk with M.~~ in the street, 'cause of being so poor-looking but he kiss'd me at the last.

I went in the hall, & waited till I'd leave to go up to the room. I curtsied to the young doctor as usual, & he nodded & smil'd to me. I told him the reason I'd kept away so long was cause I'd bin sent for all of a sudden to work for a lady, at charring, as lives in Eaton Terrace & too far off to come every time, & that I was likely to be there a week or two more. He said, 'Are you better?' I said, 'Yes, sir, only I had to go down into the coalholes & places one night after been warm in bed & I'd got a fresh cold.' The doctor said nothing to that but 'Oh' & he order'd me the same medicine again. And I went & got it & then back to Miss Otway's. On the way I bought a geranium for Massa. It was lucky 'cause Miss O. was in the hall & let me in, & thought I'd bin out to buy it. ~~Still she was angry at me~~ going without leave. I found the fishwoman in the kitchen. Miss O. had paid her & give her a bottle o' beer as well, & I was glad she was paid. I set to work at the walls till teatime, & again after till it was time to cook Miss O's dinner. It's never much else than chops & 'tatoes, & a pudding. I often wish it was different, for *taste* & a change for her, but it's better for me working as a charwoman, what I count myself now. I wrote to M. this evening & posted it late, to tell him what the doctor said.

Friday 3 May I clean'd the rest o' the windows, & Miss O. unlock'd the anteroom door & told me to clean it, & the inside room where the watercloset is. I had a very dirty job. The cobwebs was thick about the walls, & the dust & dirt too on the floors. The window was tied & I daren't try to open it, it seem'd as if it hadn't bin open'd for years, & would tumble to pieces if I did. There was just a hole in one o' the panes that let some air in, & where Miss O. said the Emperor sent spirits to hook the leaves off her plants

through. They *fell* off, as other leaves do, but she often call'd me to see the satanic fires going up, as she said *he* sent up & that he worked his sorceries in the rooms opposite. She would watch for hours, but it was nothing but lamps burning, & as for lights, I could never see them. But she said, 'Ah, they stop when they see you looking.'

Sunday 5 May I got to M by ½ past six. He sat on my lap again & we'd another nice talk. I've so much to say about Miss O. & my work & going out of errands & that. It was wet & windy, but I don't care for that to get out. Massa took me down to look at the empty kitchens below, & ask'd me if I shd like to live down there. Of course I said yes – anywhere to be at *home* & with him. I got the dinner & wash'd up. Did the usual jobs after & was late getting back, ½ past 10, & Miss Otway was angry.

Tuesday 7 May Today I wash'd my aprons & the kitchen cloths besides the usual washing up. Clean'd the knives & fetch'd the errands. And in the evening I got a written notice from Miss O. to leave this day week. The cleaning was done, so I reckon she thought I'd not enough work. I wasn't sorry. But I sent the paper to Massa in my letter tonight.

Tuesday 21 May The lad run away again today, & Miss O. didn't know what to do. So [she] ask'd Jane to stop till *tomorrow,* till she could get someone, & sent for one Hannah Harding that had been once before a while. I help'd Jane to clean the bedroom, ~~doing what I could with my left hand,~~[14] ~~shaking carpets~~ & carrying the coal & water up & down. We felt very miserable & unsettled, Jane wanting to go, & Miss O. sometimes scolding & sometimes calling us up to hear something in the newspaper, & questioning Jane about going to America. Her sweetheart's bin gone 3 years, & wants Jane to go there to him, & she's only waiting for him to send the passage money. They've bin acquainted *ten years*, she tells me, & she thinks it a terrible long while. So long that she seems hardly to care whether

Friday 1 November I wash'd up after breakfast. Sent out to get errands for dinner. Clean'd our room out, & shook the mats & carpets in the street.[31] Got coal in, & clean'd the doorsteps on my hands & knees. Wash'd my cotton frock out. Wash'd up after dinner & clean'd the sink. Clean'd me for tea. Mended stockings after. Fetch'd the supper beer at 9. The last time I saw Massa he told me how he'd bin to see Mr Vaux & Capt. Brougham & that he wanted to hear what they'd say about me so he question'd each about their calling when M. was away, & I was working there. Mr Vaux said he only saw 'the old woman that was cleaning' & everything was in disorder. One thing when Mr V. call'd it was twilight, & he had to go close to the window to find a card to leave. And tho' he was quite civil he scarce look'd towards me, & I'd my peasant's bonnet on, else I hardly think he'd o' call'd me *old*. Then Capt. B. said he only saw 'the woman who cleans your chambers.' M. seem'd vex'd, but I told him he ought to be glad, for it shows I don't seem particular to be there no more than any other body. And two or 3 times Tarrant said he thought the place would suit me, & he thought if he was me he shd try for it. I ax'd if he thought they'd have me, & he said *yes* he shd say so, for I was not too old & not too young. He said he judged me 40 by my ways but not my looks. So I said I'd see, & perhaps ask the gentleman when he come back.

Wednesday 6 November It was such a fine day. I went to Meeking's for calico to work at, wash'd it & got the dinner over. Then Emma & me started off to Paddington about some money there, & to see Emily at Mrs Henderson's. We got there about 4 & went down the area to the servants. They seem'd glad to see us, & Emily said the missis'd bin axing about me ever so many times & was going to send her to see after me next Sunday if I hadn't gone & that she must tell I was come as Mrs H. wanted to see me. Miss Margaret saw me first & in the back dining room. I made her a curtsy. She shook hands wi' me. Her hand seem'd so

tiny & thin in my big right hand, & I thought she herself look'd less than ever, but she was *very* pleasant with me & told me to go at once to see Mrs Henderson in the bedroom. So I went up & knock'd once. The Missis call'd quite loud to 'Come in, Hannah,' & I open'd the door & curtsied. She held her hand out over the big table, but as I'd heard that's bad luck I said, 'I won't shake hands over the table, ma'am,' & run round to her. She shook & press'd my hand & ask'd how I was, very kindly, & told me to sit down on a chair. I did so for a minute just on the corner of it, but when Mrs H. begun to change her dress for tea I was soon up again. She talk'd about Clara, & where I'd bin all the while, & if I wanted another place or no. I said, 'I hoped not – not that I was tired o' service but for the difficulties o' getting out.' She said, 'Whatever you do I hope you'll be happy,' & I was to be sure & come again soon to spend an evening with Emily & go down to have tea there, as Miss Bagshawe was in the drawing room waiting for her. I had tea. The new servants wear large pads & small caps & bows on their heads & have coax'd Emily to buy one, but she doesn't wear her'n regular. They ask'd if they might put Emily's on me. I said, 'Oh yes I like my hair fidgeted with,' & Fanny the cook did it. They all said what an improvement it was to me, so I looked & said, 'Do you *really* think I look better?' They said, '*yes*,' & that I look'd another creature. So I look'd at myself, & I was obliged to say I didn't think I look'd half so well with it as without it, & certainly the feel wasn't as nice. It was so heavy, the sooner it was off again the better. And they used nearly 30 hair pins – I never use but *one*.

Thursday 14 November I got a note from M. telling me to be with him at a ¼ to six, so as he may speak to me before his dinner time, & it was lucky, for at six o'clock Mr Borland came to wash his hands instead o' going straight to the London where they were to dine. I hid in the back room, & M. just come in & kiss'd me – he *had* given me directions where to sit when he brought the gentleman in after dinner.

I felt a little nervous about it all day, but I knew that wouldn't do exactly so [I] made my mind up to be as composed as I could, seeing I'd to do it & M. wish'd me to see Mr B. I got my old black silk frock ready, put plain net frills round the neck & sleeves & wash'd my face clean, & just pinn'd my hair up behind, for I don't know at all how to *'do it up* 'anyhow. I wore my cotton frock & apron under my black one. I did my usual work through the day at Mrs Smith's, washing the dishes & saucepans after dinner & cleaning the sink.

After tea I started & walk'd to Massa's. He was in. He kiss'd me, & look'd at me to see if I was right, & told me to make a nice curtsy to Mr B. I said of course I shd do that, & I was to have some coffee made for them, & I was to sit on a chair opposite the door, at the table, & under the shade o' the lamp. M. begun to tell me nearly what to *say* , but I ask'd him to leave it to me, & I'd do the best I could. They were gone two hours, & all that while I thought it all over, & things I shd like to say at first as an introduction, so as he mayn't wonder if I look embarrass'd or anything. Something like this – 'I'm sure, sir, it's impossible for *you* to know how I must feel, being shown to you – me never having been anything but a servant these 30 years & it's quite impossible for a servant to feel free & easy as a lady does, and I never could o' consented to any friend of Massa's I always thought – but you are an old & *homely* friend M. tells me & he wish'd it.'

But M. came up a few minutes afore Mr B. & flurried me rather with telling me *how* to behave, & very soon I heard Mr B. coming upstairs. As he come in M. said, 'This is Hannah, Mr Borland,' & M. look'd white & worried. I got up & curtsied. Mr B. offer'd me his hand & said, 'I've heard much of you.' I said, 'Mr Munby says he has told you *all* about me, sir.' They both went near the fireplace & Mr B. said, 'Oh yes, he has.' I rather stammered & felt as if there was no use saying my speech what I'd made up if M. had told him all, [unreadable] till I felt I *must* say something, & I got up & went nearer to Mr B. I said, 'This is the first time I've ever been shown to any o'

M.'s friends & I never wish'd, indeed hop'd never *to* be. Massa & I have spent so many hours together in this room *alone*, & ours is like a *stolen* love you know, & when it's known it seems like a *shame* , it seems as if the *charm* was broken.' Massa said, 'Oh don't say that,' very kindly, but I said, 'Oh yes it *is* .' M. told me to go & sit down on my chair. I was cutting a book for him, that was a relief, & after I'd handed the coffee to the gentleman I sat down. But then I trembled & sat just on the corner o' the chair cutting the book. Then M. said he would go in his bedroom & leave us alone to talk a while, & I wonder'd very much what it could be about, but as Mr B. was a clergyman I thought it was about being religious.

So M. left us. Mr B. lean'd against the fireplace, & as it was in the shade of the light I was glad, & I stood leaning against the fireplace too. Mr B. spoke very kindly to me but very seriously, only not exactly on religion as I expected. It was more about duty to one's parents, & trying to *persuade* me into *almost* giving M. up 'cause his parents was so much against his having me. He spoke his mind freely & so did I to him. I couldn't of course tell him *what* a peculiar love ours had bin, but I said it was quite impossible not to go on loving one another, but that I never wanted it known, I wanted to be a help not a *hindrance* to M.

But still Mr B. found difficulties. I ask'd him lots o' questions & was quite free & open with him, not afraid at all, but for all that he seem'd to get his way. We talk'd an hour & a ½ or more & at last he stopp'd & knock'd for Massa. But he'd gone fast asleep, & I'd to call him.[32] I *did* tell Mr B. that I'd bin a servant all my life & I ought to o' told him how low Massa had always kept me but I forgot it.

The talk made me feel *very* sad. I didn't like the *meaning* of what he said & I was disappointed, & surpris'd rather at M. wanting his advice about what to do with me. Massa behav'd so politely to me & come downstairs with me, & as it was wet I'd to have a cab to ride back in. Mr Borland wish'd me a kind goodbye, shaking my hand as if he didn't

mind touching it, & said, 'God bless you.' I made him a slight curtsy & said, '*Goodbye*, sir.' On the *whole* I felt hurt altho' he spoke kindly & *felt* for me no doubt. Yet his advice & reasoning was little *good* to me, & I think he must o' thought so too, for he left off talking at the last almost abruptly. I got back by 11 & went straight to bed. My sister Ellen was in bed already, but I said nothing to her, nor did she speak to me.

Friday 15 November I did my usual work, getting the dinner for M. & ours & washing up after. Did some sewing. Got to M. by ½ past six in the wet. We had a *very* pleasant evening. M. was so very kind, & I thought from his manner Mr B. had said nothing again me, except perhaps that it was a pity, after all, I wasn't a lady. If he did I think M. would say, 'But if she was a lady, you know, Mr Borland, then she wouldn't be a *servant*, & that's *just* what I like her for, & she likes it too & I think it's certainly the same reason (only exactly opposite of course) why Hannah likes me. I love her for her ignorance, & she loves me for being *different*, I won't say anything else.' No, Massa dear, nor I could not tell any other reason why I love you so unless that it's grown & grown on in all these years, & knitted so close that it canna be undone.

Saturday 23 November Got a letter from Massa to go & see him at the Temple by 3 o'clock. I was glad, but I felt weak rather. I was just going to wash his feet when someone came upstairs. I escaped wi' the basin & my things into the back room & hid myself. And it was a *lady* & gentleman, great friends of M.'s & they talk'd ever so long, that M. made excuse that he was staying away, & so they went. M. was annoy'd a bit at having to hide me but, as I told him that didn't matter a bit to me, for many a time I've bin crouch'd in the cupboard, & hid in the back room & no one dream'd of a soul being there. I wash'd M.'s feet, & then it was time for him to go to dinner, & I got back at 7 & had my tea. Before the visitors came M. show'd me a licence he'd bought – a *marriage* licence – for him & me, &

he said, 'Doesn't this show how much I love you, & what do you say to it?' I told him I had *nothing* to say about it, but I hoped he would never be sorry for it, nor *I*. Tho' I seem'd so cool & said so little I really *meant* what I said. I car'd very *very* little for the licence or being married either. Indeed I've a certain dislike to either, they seem to have so little to do with our *love* & our union. *They* are things what every common sweethearts use whether they love really or not. And ours has bin for so long a *faithful, trustful* & pure love; without any outward bond, that I seem to *hate* the word marriage in *that* sense. And yet of course I respect it as a *duty*, which ought to be done on Massa's part. Not as a *reward* to me for I want *no* reward, but as a simple duty he owes to himself, 'cause I canna be with him nor serve him as a servant nor be a helpmeet for him as I ought without it, 'cause of my *name*.

Monday 25 November I got my things in a bundle ready to go to Massa's to clean the kitchens & take care o' the place while he was away. But it rain'd so hard I consider'd it unlucky to go in the rain & I give it up as I wasn't obliged to go. M. said I could go either day as Mrs Newton was engaged on for the week. Mrs James (the lodger in the first floor) ask'd me to tea with her, & I went up at 4 o'clock in my cotton frock. She's a young thing, just married, 20 years old only & knows very little about anything, her husband's 30. Both Welsh, so we was talking about the country, for I'd just bin in it to Rhyl.[33]

Tuesday 26 November Strange, this is the date of my birthday. It was tolerably fine this morning & I started at 11. The sun broke out in Hatton Garden & I took that for good luck & come along with a better heart, carrying my bundle, & a bag with all my working things in. And I thought, 'O *come*, this sun looks *better*, & I *do* hope this is my last move, for I am tired o' going to fresh places.' So about 20 minutes past 11 this morning I enter'd Massa's service, as his own real servant & maid of all work, & come to live in his kitchen, after eighteen years o' loving &

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sometimes for extended periods, 'as a lady'. This entailed great stress for Hannah and she had no one to share this with, for certainly he had no means of understanding her feelings about it. In addition, Munby had begun telling a few people of his own class about his relationship with Hannah. When they hadn't met her or heard of her before they simply concluded that she was a lady and thought no more about it; but sometimes, as with Borland and the Hendersons, they knew a great deal more than this. Whichever, he now expected Hannah to socialise with these people as his wife. Hannah was therefore continually metamorphosing backwards and forwards between ladyhood and drudgery. And, finally, he introduced Hannah into most of his everyday life as his servant. By doing so he effectively cut off the possibility of any open life for them together in London even if Hannah had opted for ladyhood, because, apart from the trusted few, he was insistent that this transition should be a secret one that would preserve face (and caste) for him. It was in the Temple at this time, then, that the events of 1877 and their culmination in Hannah's departure, had their origins.

On a more ordinary note, Munby continued to play the ageing but still eligible bachelor, entertaining acquaintances who were waited on by Hannah, carrying on his evening classes and fulfilling his familial duties. Hannah began to attend evening classes at the Working Women's College[2] ; initially she took French, then literature and biology and physiology. Her relationship with her sister Ellen, at times difficult for them both, began to mean more to her, if for no reason than because Ellen was someone she saw fairly regularly and who stayed with her. Later still Ellen moved into the Temple to work for Munby in place of the Skeats, an elderly couple who had lived in to help Hannah with household chores. Ellen was dependable in a sisterly way; and she had problems with her own 'young man' and so was now better able to sympathise with Hannah's difficulties.

Saturday 30 August 11 o'clock a.m. I am just return'd home after ten days' tour in France with my darling Massa & husband. We started from Boulogne at two o'clock this morning after lying in our berths nearly an hour. I kept well *to*

Boulogne, & it was my first sea voyage too, except crossing the Solent for the Isle o' Wight with M. this year, & *this* journey was *rough* . But I kept well a long time, *going up & down* with the waves in imagination & not opening my eyes, but I could hear all going on, & that my husband was very bad. I ask'd after him several times from the steward & sent messages. At last I was a little bit ill, & the man didn't know till I told him. He said, 'Oh, ma'am, that was through me talking to you I doubt. However, I musn't say anything about it.' I said, 'No, don't, I shall be all the better off.'

And I went to sleep, for when I woke I was so pleas'd to see it was daylight & I felt better, & my first thought was to go & see Massa. So I jump'd out o' the berth & run along the floor tottering a little, & I found M. still sick & hoarse with retching. I wiped his face, & said I thought we were in harbour. He call'd me his child, & said how ill he'd bin & told me to go & lie down again, & so I was glad to do, for I felt sleepy & knock'd up. But soon after the man said we muct land, & I got up again & fasten'd my clothes & pick'd my things up to go ashore. Massa came for me, & when we landed it was a fine calm morning, the sun just rising & all so quiet & still. So different to the night [we] came to & started from Folkstone.

This ten days has been quite new to me of course, crossing from Folkstone to Boulogne & from Boulogne to Rouen. There we saw the ancient buildings & statue of Gean D'arc and the beautiful churches. And at the Hotel d'Alvion where we stopp'd was a most amusing little maid, bowing & scraping in the most lively attitude, & most civil to Monsieur & Madame. When I left she help'd me on with my cloak & as well as I could said, 'Nous reveney,' & then, 'How funny that you & I cannot understand one another,' me meaning both being servants. But she only laugh'd & said, 'Oui, Madame.' We had a long sail from Rouen to Honfleur in the boat, but a very pleasant one, along the river Seine. Most days we have had long journeys, by rail & road or water & seen a great deal in the time, & only stayed one night in a place except at Caen, &

that was over the Sunday.

And everywhere I was treated most respectfully, just as if I was a real lady. And Massa says I behaved nicely & look'd like a lady too. He bought me a felt hat & plume of cock's feathers to wear, & a veil, & a new brooch to pin my shawl with, & a new waterproof cloak. But I generally wore my blue skirt & jacket over my grey frock, with frill round my neck, & white cuffs, & grey kid gloves, & carrying my striped sun shade. All so different to anything I had got used to, but one day in the train I got almost ill-temper'd at being so muffled up, & I felt I'd much liefer feel my hands free as they used to be. But M. made me put the gloves on again, & I thought it was hard to be forced to wear gloves – even harder than it was to leave 'em off altogether before I was married, as I did for over 16 year I think. When I started I wore my old black bonnet to Folkstone, & changed it there, & the same back again, & put my plaid shawl over my skirt so I wasn't noticed coming into the Temple nor going out.

Two young girls came over in the boat with me – one English, & the other French as couldn't speak a word of English, so when M. left me at Charing Cross I went to see after them. The English girl had lost her box & didn't know the name o' the place it was put in at, so I told the man & went with her to the office & they promised to telegraph for it & to send it on to her home. There was no one to meet the French girl, & she didn't know where to go to, but was to 'restey ici' she said till her brother came. I spoke to a porter for her, & he spoke French, & was kind & civil, & promised to take care of her. I left her in the waiting room & shook hands with her & come on here after getting a cup o' coffee at the station.

And here I am again, very glad to get back. I've doff'd all my best clothes & put my own on again – my dirty cotton frock & apron & my cap – taken the top dust off the things & lighted the fire, fetch'd in some bread & butter & got my dinner. Then I rested till M. came in, & we unpack'd our bags & things & then pack'd the large portmanteau for M. to start home with. He was gone by ½

past 5 after wishing me a hearty goodbye & hoping I should not be dull. I said I shouldn't & didn't mean to be, but I think it's not possible to be any other, quite alone in this very quiet place, & not a soul to speak to confidentially. For I'm obliged to look at my words lest I shd say anything to Mrs Newton or anyone to betray myself. Monday if all's well I'm going after the workman & tonight I go to bed soon to have a long rest, for I feel upset & very tired & sleepy.

Sunday 31 August I got up at 9 o'clock & dress'd in my servants clothes. Lighted the fire & got my breakfast. Mr Rees came in between ten & eleven – he saw the black door was open & came upstairs. I went to the door. He said, 'You've come back, Hannah.' I said, 'Yes, sir.' So he told me how he was sleeping away at his mother's for the present, & that I may keep the outer door shut as much as I liked. And then he went down again saying, 'Good morning,' & I said, 'Good morning, sir,' and I saw no one else here the rest o' the day. But I went over to Mrs Smith's by *tea time* meaning to go to church there, but Emma wasn't willing & they were so interested hearing all about my journey I had to give up going, & at ½ past ten I walked back & to bed.

Monday 1 September First thing I went to the surveyor's office – the foreman he was the representative. After I'd said, 'Good morning, sir,' & if there was any answer to Mr Munby's letter from the surveyor about the work, the foreman said he didn't think there was any need of an answer if Roberts had promised to see about it, & he *had* seen a note of it somewhere & anyhow he could let me know in the morning. So I wrote & told M. what I knew & also how I miss'd the politeness I'd bin used to in France. The Englishmen seem almost *rude* in their bluntness, & certainly civility & politeness is much the pleasantest. Only I think everyone knows the English *don't* mean to be rude, & it wouldn't be right to say the French only put on or *learn* their civility & do not really mean it.

Mrs Newton came this morning. She saw the door open

than any o' the pit wenches. And I scour'd round the room changing the water 3 or 4 times, & talking now & then my simple talk, & bits o' French, till about ½ past one he got so sleepy & I was still then, & he went fast off. And I felt tired too, & I lay on the bed waiting for the laundress & *I* went to sleep. At 3 [I] woke M. & he came down & wash'd & dress'd to start away again. I thought I shd feel dull & bad after, but M. kiss'd me so heartily & said such a nice goodbye, & I went out of errands & pass'd it off & went to bed by 9, for it was raining all the evening.

Sunday 14 September Altho' Massa has bin & gone away again so sudden I've not felt dull today, nor last night either. Mr Rees (the gentleman on the ground floor) coming while M. was saying goodbye, & Massa of course not wanting to be seen especially in the kitchen, it started both of us. M. was off to get dinner before going to King's Cross, & I up Fetter Lane in the rain to get my errands in. So when I come back to my tea in the kitchen I was at home again, & all was again as afore M. came, only I felt *happier*. How could I help it, after having such a proof of his love – to come from impulse 2 hundred miles just to see me after I had written to him what I didn't think was anything especially nice. But *he* liked it, & in the afternoon couldn't help starting from Wigan, to me, instead of going to his other home – all for *love*. And I was as much pleas'd as I was surprised when I got the telegram soon after six to say he would be here from ten to 11. I'd begun to feel very tired, but all that was gone, & I made haste & made his bedroom quite ready & air'd things. Went out afore I wash'd me for things for his tea, & then I clean'd the kitchen round on my hands & knees & made a nice bright fire & tea things laid & all for my dear lord & master. And it seem'd so much nicer & more homely & cosy somehow, getting the *kitchen* ready for *him*.

Should I have felt *such* pleasure for a common working man? I *might* if I had found a working man as could love as purely & be as Massa is (I mean in everything but his

learning) & honour him as much, but that's a difficulty I doubt, the finding such a one. And so when I was young & *did* meet with Massa (whose face I'd seen in the fire) I made my mind up that it was best & safest to be a slave to a *gentleman*, nor wife & equal to any vulgar man, still with the wish & determination to be independent by working in service and without the slightest hope o' been rais'd in rank either in place or by being married. And so at last after all these nearly twenty years, by God's help & Massa's true heart & fervent love to me (more than ever I could dare to hope for from anyone but him, & I always trusted Massa). I am as I am. A servant still, & a very low one, in the eyes o' the world. I can work at ease. I can go out & come in when I please, & I can look as degraded as ever I like without caring how much I'm despised in the Temple, or in Fetter Lane or in the streets.

And with all that I have the inward comfort o' knowing that I am loved & honoured & admired & that I am united in heart & soul as well as married at church to the truest, best, & handsomest man in my eyes that ever was born. No man I ever see, or ever saw, is so lovely. And M. is pleas'd with me & after all this there can be no doubt of our being made for each other. And so may God bless together, & give us both wisdom to live happily always, & health & strength to do the work afore us, & grace that we may never forget who is the giver of all our comforts, & to praise Him more & more. But Massa would not sleep in his own room, but downstairs in the kitchen bedroom with me & we talk'd till two o'clock. And in the morning he noticed how rough my knees are. They feel like a nutmeg grater, so different to his, & M. was so pleas'd to feel 'em 'cause he said, it was such a true sign of being a servant.

I went to St. James's Church this evening & enjoy'd the service very much – such nice quiet singing – and I saw the clergyman who married us, & thought he look'd at me.

Tuesday 16 September After my breakfast I went upstairs & did the last ranges o' bookshelves. Then I was got dusty, & I thought of the hamper, for the office was closed when I

quite glad & happy, also that M. was coming back.

Monday 22 September I got up soon after 7, but wasn't to call M. till 9[4] so I was quiet till then, & then I went in & give him some kisses as usual, to wake him up. And then I had much pleasure in getting his breakfast once again, but the carpenter came at ten which hinder'd me sitting as usual to read in the Bible at his breakfast. But I had to go down-stairs & let M. ring for me for orders afore he went out. I put my French cap on for upstairs, & my old-fashion'd print dress which is sixty years old I think, for it belong'd to a farmer's daughter *Miss Bird*, & I've heard her say she bought it when she was a young woman, & when I knew her she was very old, & that's years & years ago. But M. likes it *so much* that I only wear it now & then, for it's 'never to be wore out', Massa says. He brought a hamper for me to unpack, with a many pretty flowers – it took me one hour to arrange the vases. I wash'd up & made the beds [&] unpack'd the portmanteaus. Then I walk'd to the stores in Haymarket, & got the 2 gallon can of oil & 6 bottles of claret, taking the empty ones with me. I felt them heavy & so I only rested a second or so at some picture shop windows, for the quicker you go with a load the better, I think, & the sooner you get home, of course. I trimm'd the lamp, carried coals up, & water, after my dinner. Then I got the milk from Fetter Lane & M.'s dinner ready by six. We spent a pleasant evening together, & I wash'd his feet & read to him at tea time.

Friday 26 September M. dined at the club tonight, & come back to tea soon after ten o'clock. He always asks how the man is getting on with the windows. I told him how I doubt they will not be finish'd even by tomorrow, else Massa wanted to take me out with him, to a new place – somewhere on the Thames. So he's going alone, to give me a chance of cleaning up in the evening. When I clean'd the watercloset out last Saturday & I was so dirty I thought of the difference 'twixt me *then*, & when I was with Massa in France & being look'd on by everybody as a *lady*, only a

fortnight ago. Massa said I behaved very nicely all through, at the grand hotel too where there was a many real ladies about. He said that he wasn't once asham'd of me, & of course I'm glad of it, but it's all the same to me, being *this* or that. Of the two I'd choose to be dirty & clean out the closet tho', because there's no seeming to be what one isn't in this. And that when I'm with M. & have to remember I'm in disguise it would be no wonder if I felt conscious & ashamed of myself as being *unfit*, & knowing I was a servant myself all the while the chambermaids or waiters bow'd to me & call'd me 'Madame'

It seems strange just now to me, after all these years o' being a servant that I shd go to France & travel about with M., stopping at the best hotels & all as if I was ever so much a lady in reality. It's just come into my head what my sister Polly told me nearly twenty years ago about Aunt Mary. It was soon after I first knew Massa & I had told Aunt Elisabeth about him & somehow or other she told her sister about it, & said something about me being sent to school & learning French (perhaps in fun). But Aunt Mary Sherratt said in a scornful way, '*She* learn indeed! A wench that's bin only brought up with navvies & Irish folks.' That was because we had Irish neighbours, & lodgers in our house that were navvies, making the line of railway from Birmingham to Shrewsbury.

And how Mother first begun taking in lodgers was that when they sold beer, & Mrs Jones o' the Dog[5] couldn't find room for all as come, she would send up & ask Mother to oblige her. And so it went on & on, & times got worse instead o' better that poor Mother was glad to get lodgers at 4d a night for the best beds & 3d in the attics. And I remember once how a Welshman came to lodge, & he ask'd for some breakfast. It was unusual, & when he ask'd Mother how much he ow'd she said, 'I will leave it to you, sir,' and he gave her 6d – for the bed & all. She was sadly took in, but could say nothing as it was to be left to him. My Mother's maiden name was Owen & so perhaps was partly Welsh, I don't know. I *have* learnt some French lately, & so I did years ago when I lived under the French

cook, but as years went on, & Massa didn't seem to care for me knowing things above myself, I gave up caring to learn anything.

Yes, I had to wait on the lodgers at home, the navvies as well. I was a biggish girl at 7 & 8 & help'd Mother a good deal, & I once told her if I could always have creaking boots I shd be always good & active, & more especially if she would let me have tea with her. But she said, 'No, Hannah, if I let you the others will want the same & I cannot have you at our table except at dinner.' And I never did till the day I went away to live nurserymaid 3 miles off at Ryton, & then Mother let me ask my friend May Yardley from next door, to have tea with me, & she dress'd my hair before starting. It was like going far, far away, for I'd not been a day at the Lion nor at Mr Phillips's without running up home, if 'twas only for a minute, to see Mother. But I thought I'd be brave & start without crying, & I kept up well till the last minute, & Mary the Irish – woman begun & it set me off too, but I started along with Jim my brother. He came with me 'cause my box was gone to the village in a market cart, & so we had to fetch it from there & carry it up a steep hill.

So I walk'd to my place & took my box with me. And we were let into the passage. I said goodbye to Jim & saw him turn back. Then I stood till the upper nurse came to me, & the while I was standing in the passage the servants pass'd & re-pass'd along the passage & the footman came & star'd, & there was the Master pass'd to his room to dress for late dinner. The house seem'd to me like a palace. So big, & the doors banging & sounding as they do in a big house till I felt frighten'd, & yet as if I was making a very grand start – & I was to have *6 lbs [£] a year*. I thought six pounds a very great deal o' money then, of course, but I remember that I'd a very great deal o' work to do for it – nurserymaid to a family of six children & to wait on the head nurse & governess, the children's boots to clean & all the bath water to carry up & down, & the two great nurseries & a long passage to scour on my hands & knees once a week. And I did the work eight months & would

longer, only I was frighten'd of Mrs Eyton my Missis. She did go mad afterwards, & I used to think she look'd so, when she talk'd to me in such passions & scold me for nothing.

Tuesday 30 September This is the last day o' the month, & Massa only wishes me to write to the end. And I am glad of it somehow, for I've got so thoroughly tired o' writing what I think to most people must be very tiresome & certainly *disinteresting*. I hardly think I shd care to read one *lady's* diary of twenty years standing tho' of course their'n would be more varied than a servant's can possibly be. And so I've told M. that by making me write for so many years he has quite tired me of it, & yet for some things I am most glad that he's not tired of reading it.

Today M. expected an invitation to dinner at his relation Mrs Pearson's & he was to come here early anyhow to let me know from Whitehall & at 4 o'clock he came. I was upstairs, but I heard that on his way in he met with Mr Rees & ask'd him to come up. So I popp'd into the back room to hide, thinking that M. would sure to shut the parlour door, but he did not for some time & I was fidgety as they sat talking a good while. I heard M. say, 'How do you like the tobacco I got you?' & Mr Rees said, 'Oh, by the way, I owe you for that.' 'Oh, I hardly know,' says Massa. 'Will you kindly ask your servant,' Mr Rees said, & then I peep'd in at the door & sign'd for Massa to shut it. I heard him say, 'I've rung for her,' & then he got up & shut the door. Then I quietly went down, & in a minute or two came up to answer the bell, in my cap & apron as usual.

I open'd the door & Massa says, 'Oh Hannah, I rung the bell to tell you I shall dine out this evening.' I said, 'Very well, sir,' & then Mr Rees spoke & said, 'Do you know whether I paid Mr Munby for that tobacco some time ago?' I said, 'No, sir, you had no change on you when I brought it down to you.' And so I back'd out o' the room to go down to the kitchen, my dear husband looking at me in a masterly way & saying, 'I shall ring again for you presently.' I said, 'Very well, sir,' & went down, doing

odd jobs till I heard Mr Rees come down & wish M. goodbye; for he's going out on circuit[6] now for weeks so that he's scarcely been living here all the summer. I like him to be away, 'cause then we have the whole house to ourselves & I can keep the outer door shut. And I seldom see Mrs Newton or Tarrant the while. I often think they must feel that I am dull here, not knowing as well as I do *what* I am besides just a servant & what pleasant evenings Massa & me spend here together, especially when I am really good. But that isn't always I'm either glad or sorry to say – or both. Sorry because it vexes M. so much at the time, but glad, 'cause it makes me more humble & sorry afterwards, & anxious to be right again.

Last Sunday Mr Borland came. He's the only friend of M.'s that has ever seen me to know me & almost the only one as knows about us. I've seen him once before twelve months ago, when M. was in such a difficulty not knowing how to settle things & so afraid to let me live in the Temple with him, which thing of course I would not even as a servant without been married. So Mr Borland met me here & talk'd to me alone for an hour or so making me feel vex'd & dispirited rather than pleas'd, for all he was gentle & kind in his manner to me. For as I told him then, it was quite impossible for *him* or anyone else to understand our love. That night I wish'd him goodnight shaking hands, & he kindly said, 'God bless you.' I left him & M. together in this same room to talk things over as they did till one o'clock M. told me after and I went back to sleep in my little room in Clerkenwell where I was lodging. But this time Mr Borland left *us* .

Massa had a cold & was in all last Sunday & he rather expected him, and as Mr B. knows I do all the work here as a servant I didn't want to be drest up as a lady (as if on purpose) so M. let me keep in my own dress. I'd just clean'd away the first part of dinner (about six) & was down in the kitchen when I heard a knock at the outside door. I run upstairs to ask M. whether he or me should let Mr B. in, & also that [I] mayn't seem shy or afraid to be seen I ought to be upstairs. I had my usual lilac frock on

with sleeves pinn'd up, white apron, my new French cap, & my spotted red kerchief across my shoulders. *That* I don't always wear, but it was turn'd colder & besides, I like it very much, & I fancy it looks remarkably pretty, & I kept it on at first.

Mr Borland came up with Massa, & I stood up & met Mr B. from behind the big chair, & he very heartily shook hands, & saying, 'It's very late, but I wish you very much happiness,' & calling me by a new name. I curtsied & said, 'Better late than never, sir,' & he said, 'Ah, it is,' saying the words over again. And after saying a little more & finding he was going away to St. Paul's for the evening service, I went downstairs thinking M. would make that right for me, & they might also have things to say *alone* . Of course I soon came up again, & M. was lending his galoshes & waterproof coat (it rain'd all day & evening) & helping to put them on, & M. said to me, 'Mr Borland's going now, but will come back to tea after service.' I smil'd & said, 'That's right,' and he hurried off looking anxiously at me & then I clean'd the rest o' the dinner things & wash'd up.

Afterwards M. & me had talk'd about the first part of his friend's evening. I didn't tell him how nervous I felt at first, but I've no doubt he guess'd all that, & indeed I thought Massa seem'd just a little confused as he let Mr B. in.

When I come in the room again I had slipp'd my red shawl off (I thought Mr B. might think I was muffled) but M. soon noticed it & ask'd me where my red kerchief was, & told me to keep it on. I was glad to hear Mr B. call me *Hannah* so nicely, as he did the second time. And M. seem'd determined he shd notice my dress, for he said as he came in the room, '*Here's Hannah* in her ~~French dress~~!' But I canna tell in which Mr Borland liked to see me in best, the one before, or after, at tea. He didn't *seem* to see either very much, which I was glad of for one thing, but of course I wanted him to like the servant's ~~dress best, &~~ really to *like* it.

I swept the hearth & made the fire up, & then brush'd

my hands well & wash'd me, not at the sink but upstairs, & brush'd my hair & that, & did it up simply behind to do without a cap. But when I come in ready dress'd with grey frock & fresh frill round my neck & white cuffs on my wrists, M. says, 'I think you *must* wear your muslin cap.' So I put it on, & he wouldn't let me take it off again, for all I said I thought it didn't match well & look'd too much altogether. Then I laid the tea things & cut bread & butter, & M. settled that I was to sit in the big chair & in the centre, Mr Borland on my left hand & himself on my right, & I was to pour out the tea. But I made M. promise to take my place when I ask'd him, as I wanted to get away from such a post, & to sit in the shade o' the lamp cutting books or something while they talk'd & finish'd tea.

I made the toast early so as my face shouldn't look red nor that I shd have things to do at the last minute, for after all, sitting down & pouring out tea for two gentlemen seem'd a great deal for me to do. Still, I felt that nothing could be done without self-possession, & which I've found out is the great difference 'twixt a lady & a servant, & which I must own too is scarcely possible for a thorough servant to *have* except in her own kitchen. And even there she must be what I call a presumptuous one except with the servants under her, 'cause it shows that she forgets the kitchen is *not* her own. Yet I pity the servants who always remember it, no one can tell her feelings who *does* remember that & forgets that she's working & earning all her wages. I went out to service too soon, before I really understood the meaning of it.

At the charity school I was taught to curtsy to the ladies & gentlemen & it seem'd to come natural to me to think them *entirely* over the lower class & as if it was our place to bow & be at their bidding, & I've never got out o' that feeling somehow. I must leave it to others to judge whether I am the better or worse for it. But I've run away from last Sunday to my school days, & my thoughts have fled through 36 years of my life since in these few moments – how quick is thought!

At nine o'clock Mr Borland came upstairs (for the outside door was left open) & Massa let him in these rooms. He

begun to tell us how nice the service was, & took his wet things off. Then I begun to pour the tea out, & sat down in the big chair, feeling a bit nervous certainly. But I tried to be at home, & Mr B. handed things to me, & spoke as daintily as if I was a lady. Of course I felt it, but after the second cup was pour'd out I ask'd M. to come into my chair & I would cut a book in *his* place, which I did. They talk'd about France & the pictures we had brought with us from there, me saying as little as possible & yet not seeming to be quite silent. I thought Mr Borland kind for not talking to me much, but M. didn't seem to like that. At tea I ask'd Massa to put more water in the teapot. I only did that as Mr B. shd see we were sociable together. We've bin so used to being alone Massa & I, that anyone with us makes it not like the same thing.

At 11 o'clock I took the tea things away, & made some gruel for Massa, & Mr B. talk'd of going, & wouldn't be persuaded to stop longer tho' I offer'd to go to my own room. So I help'd him on with his coat, & he wish'd me a kind goodbye, & promised to [see] Massa again before he left London.

I am reading out to Massa Miss Thackeray's story of *Reine* the French peasant, & very nice it *is* .[7] I have enjoy'd it very much, & the latter chapters I have read over & over to myself as well as to M. Enfield's *History of Philosophy* I like to look over to myself, but M. thinks it's too tedious & dry for me to read every evening, & so he says I shall read Richardson's *Clarissa Harlowe* next.

The other day I met old Jimmy in Fetter Lane. He's a funny little man that works at Smith's the wigmaker's by here, & I know him from his asking me to let the key o' the shop stop in the kitchen sometimes. I was going on my errands in [my] apron & my rustic black bonnet with cap all round my face as usual, & carrying the Mawdsley basket & jug for milk & that, when he suddenly come out of a shop & look'd up at me, for he's so short he *has* to look up ever so far into my face. So I said, '*What* , Jemmy, are you here?' & he said, '*Yes* , my love' (I often hear him calling the women in the Temple '*dear* ' so it's his funny way) '& I've met with *you* out at last, so pray what can I

MUNBY
MAN OF TWO WORLDS

The Life and Diaries of
Arthur J. Munby
1828-1910

DEREK HUDSON

GAMBIT

1972

334 - Is he ashamed embarrassed
public vs private (be a servant)
M's inner conflict

→ does she internalize her subservience?
→ value of her work? - noble, sanctified
→ 'bred' - 'naturally' refined'
↙ tame animal
↘ involuntary
↑ How people are brought up.
↓ socialized
something you can't avoid natural process of development
↓ unless you isolate yourself.

I ♥ PUGS

- are the diaries coordinated
  - Hannah's more defailed?
  - his diary more affection?
- Maybe they are hiding, not writing about certain things - who is going to Read them?

The death of a second Pearson cousin—this time Julius Pearson, who was only thirty-two—meant another funeral service at the Paddington church, another interment at Kensal Green. Hannah came to show her sympathy.

Thursday, 4 May . . . Amongst the crowd of poor folks at the church door, there stood a tall young woman, humbly clad, with a gentle earnest face. She wore an oldfashioned black strawbonnet, with a milkwoman's frilled cap inside; an old grey cloak, a lilac cotton frock, a white apron. Evidently, she was a servant: her hands looked rough with work, and round her wrist she wore a common leather strap. As we drove solemnly away, she, meekly hiding, gazed at me with tender wistful eyes; and I at her, with eyes not less sad. Oh humble wistful face, how long shall it be thus with you and me? Here is another death, and our mutual life is not yet begun!

Friday, 5 May . . . walked to Albemarle Street by about 9, and heard Ralston lecture on Russian folklore, at the Royal Institution. An excellent lecture, and a crowded and brilliant audience. Tourguenef was there, a tall large man with white hair & heavy features, pleasant of countenance: Lord Houghton, ill-favoured & obese . . . George Macdonald, with shaggy locks and plaid . . . & many more. After some talk, I walked home by 11; glad to see my old friend winning the fame which he thinks it worth while to seek.

Friday, 26 May . . . went to Hampstead, to an evening party at Upper Terrace Lodge: the hostesses, Mrs James, Miss Coates, & Miss Marion James, authoress of 'Janet's Home' & one or two other novels. One of the pleasant old redbrick Hampstead houses; courtyard and row of tall limes on one side, and on the other, a garden looking over the Heath towards Hertfordshire. The party chiefly literary and artistic: among others, George Du Maurier,[9] and his rather elegant wife, whose figure one sees so often in Punch. Du M. himself seems a clever fellow; he sang several French songs extremely well, accompanying himself. I stayed till after twelve, and walked all the way home with Stone of the Chancery bar, son of Frank Stone and brother of Marcus. The freshness & fragrance of Hampstead was delightful.

Monday, 3 July. To the Arts Club, and dined there, and had a long talk with Ralston, who has just been paying another visit to Tennyson, at T's new house near Haslemere. Tourguenef has asked R. to stay with him at Baden; but R. declares he could not resist the gaming tables. He will have it, too, that the new book he is writing is simply the product of ennui; and that if I had not such a 'wholesome enjoyment' of life, I should bring out *my* book at once. . . .

[9] George Du Maurier (1834–96) had contributed drawings to *Punch* since 1860. He wrote his three novels, including *Trilby*, in the last years of his life.

This suggests something of the impression Munby made on an intimate friend. Ralston saw a man of wide interests, an extrovert who was always in society and enjoyed life, a writer who was apparently too busy to write. It is unlikely that even Ralston appreciated the extent of Munby's diary, still less the evidence of recurring depression that it contains; and he knew nothing of the problem of Hannah.

Another old friend, Whitley Stokes, whose departure for India was recorded at length in the diary in June, 1862, now returned on leave—to receive a warm welcome from the Rossetti circle.

Wednesday, 5 July. To the University Club, and went to Chelsea by 7 p.m. to dine at 16 Cheyne Walk with Dante Rossetti, and meet my old acquaintance Whitley Stokes, now Legislative Secretary to the Government of India, who has come home on leave. I was the first to arrive, and found Dante and his brother William in the large quaint studio, full of great easels and hung with D.G.R's sketches—portraits of Browning & Swinburne among them. I was shown several pictures in progress; large idealized portraits of Mrs Morris, wife of William Morris the poet; a glorious heroic face, certainly, & Rossetti told me—what indeed is obvious—that most of his recent female faces are studied from her. While we talked, and Rossetti, looking like a younger Faust, in that weird chamber, was nursing his Canadian marmot in his arms, the others came in; C. B. Cayley the translator of Dante, and F. W. Burton the painter, and John Ormsby the critic, and Whitley Stokes, whose tall slight figure is now topped with a robust complexion and a flowing beard. After a hearty greeting all round, we went upstairs to dine in that large and lordly upper chamber with the deep half cylinder alcove, looking out on the river. But the wonderful figured Japanese curtains that line that side of the room were drawn; pictures and ancient china and grotesque bronzes and black carven furniture relieve the blue wainscot, and break up the vast apartment into spaces well arranged and harmonious; and in the midst is the white table, lit by red waxlights in silver candelabra, standing on a great antique silver plateau. The glass, the china, are all antique: the dinner, elaborate and refined, is handed round by a single female servant; a robust and comely young matron, whose large strong hands, used to serving, contrast with the small hands of her master, used to pictures and to poems. She offers the dishes with a quaint simplicity, pointing out to you the best part of each. And we, we talked as of old, ten years ago, about literature, poetry, art: and Stokes, with his old exuberance of spirits preserved by success and honour, told us his adventures—how, for instance, he was entertained by the Rajah of Kuppartoola, whose ladies adorned him with cashmere shawls and jewelled bracelets, and how he rode away on a white horse with jewelled saddle, the Rajah's gift.

Stokes and Ormsby left about eleven, after coffee, & Cayley too: but we with

our cigarettes went down to the studio again; and Rossetti read aloud some new poems of young Philip Marston's,[1] which all admired, and the more, because poor Philip is blind, and yet sees nature with marvellous fidelity. Then the talk turned on early memories; and the two Rossettis reminded each other of childish things; how Dante made drawings of his rocking horse, at the age of 4; how Christina, in those days, had such a dreadful temper; how they all talked Italian and English both. Dante mentioned that he was born in 1828.[2] At last, about 1 a.m., they opened the hall door and showed the moonlight shining on the river, through the lofty iron gates, between the ancient elms: and Ralston and I said Goodnight (he had come in late) and walked home together.

Wednesday, 12 July. Breakfasted with Litchfield in Hare Court; and he gave me the first news of his engagement—only yesterday—to Miss Henrietta Darwin, aged 28, daughter of Charles Darwin the philosopher. Rejoiced to hear of my old and beloved friend's happiness, I yet have dwelt all day on his words, after speaking of her intellect and power—'She does not believe in a personal God'. How wide we have to stretch our sympathies, now a days! . . .

Friday, 21 July . . . to Spring Gardens, to an afternoon party at Vernon Lushington's. There I was introduced by Litchfield to Miss Henrietta Darwin his fiancée: a petite young woman of 27, with a face not unlike the photographs of her father, but very feminine and tender; with bright hazel eyes, and every feature full of life and expression, but subdued and selfpossest withal. . . .

Munby spent a week in France and Belgium at the end of August. He returned in time to attend Litchfield's wedding, but did not do so, noting in the diary: 'This is Litchfield's wedding day: a wedding which saddens and depresses me, for it takes away the last but one of my unmarried friends' (31 August). The last bachelor friend was probably Borland, but might have been Ralston; neither married.

On 9 September he paid his first visit to the Surrey village of Ockley, south of Leith Hill. On 23 September, he travelled back to his home at York. Most of the next three weeks was spent either in the Lake District, or with his family at Scarborough.

Friday, 29 September: Ambleside . . . The Salutation bears the date 1656; and though it is now modern looking and full priced, and rife with the things that 'civilized' tourists like, I was glad to find that M^rs^ Townson the landlady was homely & oldfashioned and spoke Cumbrian. She and her stout blooming daughter and her maids, all talking in the bar, next the smoking room, gave out

[1] Philip Bourke Marston (1850–87), son of John Westland Marston.
[2] i.e. the same year as Munby.

a rich music of broad a's and o's, and antique words, that was pleasant to hear. M^rs^ T. came in to welcome me, with a simple and matronly curtsey, and then sat down and talked. Born, and bred near here, she had known the famous residents of old. She was loud in praise of Dr. Arnold, that 'good man', who used to come and read to her when she was ill; and of Hartley Coleridge: eh, he *was* a dear kind man! and as for children, he was so fond of em he would catch em up and clasp em—like this—and feel in his pockets and say 'No, not a penny to give away!' 'for, poor fellow, they never allowed him money, you know Sir.' And reason good, alas! Of Miss Martineau[3] (who still lives, almost bedridden now 14 years) she spoke with respectful awe, as of something wonderful but uncanny. 'They do say, Sir, she believes in no God nor devill' she said with a grim smile—'Eh, I remember when she used to lecture here aboot her travels, and a waistcoat on and her hair parted a one side, looking like a wonderful *man* amost; but there—she's a deal wiser than me, I knaw—and the clergy was again her, and stopped it.' She was strangely severe on Wordsworth. You've often seen him? 'Aye, Sir, *too* often! A hard man he was—never gaave a sixpence to bury his old gardener 'at had lived with him 30 year, nor went [to] funeral neither—and was all for bringing down poor folks' waages. He got my husband turned oot on his plaace, (hinc illae lacrymae, perhaps) aye, he did Sir—but the Lord was with us' which means, that we took the Salutation, and made money. It is strange and annoying to hear such tales of him to whom one owes so much: but certainly, his exquisite soul lacked, not only humour, but the will or power of being en rapport with small folks in common things. Yet his epitaph in Grasmere church says that he 'never tired of maintaining the cause of the poor and simple'.[4] . . .

At Flamborough there was news of another wedding which had almost as depressing an effect on Munby as that of Litchfield and Miss Darwin. Molly Nettleton, the cliff-climber to whom he had given the rope, had married her sweetheart George White, and gone to live at Bempton. It was, commented Munby, 'another rustic idyll ended, another chapter of old associations finished & laid by' (13 October).

Saturday, 4 November . . . at 8, to the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street. We, Council and Students, but specially the students, offered this evening a wedding reception to Litchfield and his bride.

The whole thing was managed by Tansley and the other students, with admirable vigour and enthusiasm: a great tent, with boarded floor, covered the garden, between the old house and the new lecture rooms; and after several choruses of wedding music, from the Huguenots and elsewhere, had been sung by the choir of students, men and women, in the circular hall, we went into the

[3] Harriet Martineau (1802–76).
[4] It is probable that the landlady of the Salutation had a particular grudge against Wordsworth, who is known to have shown consideration to several of his servants.

arrived inebriated, and had to be concealed down stairs. One person new to me and interesting, was R. H. Horne,[2] the author of Orion: I was surprised to find him a small and feeblelooking *old* man, with thin white hair. People here, of course, were lamenting Mazzini. After a good deal of pleasant talk, I left about 12.30 (quite early) and walked home.[3] At dinner today I took down that charming M^me^ Jeannin, who with the best intentions gave me many a cruel stab in her discourse—for she spoke of servants. She told me the story of Mary Jervis; whose mistress, wife of Col. Cleather of the Engineers, is a friend of hers. After Mary had left her service, Mrs. C. met her in Marshall & Snelgrove's, very well drest, but as gentle and respectful as ever, and told her to call next day; for she was fond of Mary. Next morning early, a card was sent up—'The Marchioness of Westmeath': and Mrs. C.'s late housemaid entered. 'Why Mary, is this your card—are *you* Marchioness of Westmeath?' 'Yes Ma'am,' said Mary, simply: and she was.

Monday, 1 April . . . Today I had a great shock: the news that my friend, and teacher & master, Professor Maurice, is dead! He died this morning, here in London. How many, besides me, will miss his beautiful venerable face—his piercing eye and wonderfully sweet smile, his cordial shake of the hand, and the devout earnestness of his tremulous fatherly voice!

Friday, 5 April . . . I went up to Highgate, to the funeral of my most revered friend and teacher, Professor Maurice. About 1 p.m. I reached Swain's Lane, and there near the gates of 'Holly Village' found the men of the Working Men's College assembled, all in mourning: Tansley, and Thrower, and Newton—most of the hearty kindly working men whom one has known at the College so long—I shook hands and joined them, and presently up came Professor Seeley, with whom I had some talk about Maurice's last hours; and then Lowes Dickinson, Vernon Lushington, and others of the Council. The Dean of Westminster, with Lady Augusta and George Grove, passed us, driving up to the Cemetery: and then about 1.15 the funeral carriages appeared: the hearse, and some ten mourning coaches, in which were Edmund Maurice, the Miss Sterlings, Charles Kingsley, Llewellyn Davies, J. M. Ludlow, J. S. Brewer, and others of his oldest friends. Behind the last coach, we, the other friends, and members of the W.M. College, fell in and walked in fours: the eight pallbearers first, of whom I was one. . . . I came back with Charles Kingsley.

Saturday, 6 April . . . to Kensington, called on . . . the Ashursts, who were at home. We talked of Mazzini, who was a great friend of theirs: of his humble lodgings here in Brompton, of his teaching & befriending Italian organ boys, and

[2] Richard Henry or Hengist Horne (1803–84). He received a civil list pension in 1874.

[3] But the diary records, with honesty, that he did not reach the office until 11.45 the next morning; he was not as young as he used to be.

of the Italian . . . who (there being no one to remonstrate) has had his body disinterred and is embalming it to keep it above ground. Mazzini, it seems, had the greatest horror of such a fate—and the Ashursts, and James Stansfeld M.P. their brother in law, are trying to prevent the desecration.

I walked homeward through Kensington Gardens & Hyde Park. Men were placing in situ the third of the four white marble groups at the corners of the Prince Consort's Monument: the Asia, a very fine and beautiful group[4]—whilst it is clean and new. In the Gardens I met George Hudson, son of the Railway King, who told me that his mother, poor soul, is living at 22 Hornton Street, Kensington.

So the Club by 6, and dined and read there till 8.15, and then to Her Majesty's at Drury Lane, & heard Fidelio. . . . Seeing it at least once a year, this must be about the twentieth time that I have seen Fidelio, which to me is always a kind of religious service and spiritual test: and the great prison scene was this year almost overpowering, coming so soon after the funeral of Maurice. Often and involuntarily, between me and the scene I seemed to see his venerable beautiful face, looking up at me with intenseness of fatherly cordiality, as he used to do and will do no more. . . .

Friday, 19 April . . . Walked in the Temple Gardens, and on by Queen Victoria Street into the City, to dine in Milk Street, at a large restaurant which announces itself to me by circular as having 'a staff of quiet and wellconducted *waitresses*' instead of waiters. A wholesome innovation, and we may as well see whether it is 'attended with good results', as it should be. It was nearly 6 when I got there, and folk dine early in the City; so the first room I entered was empty, and its waitresses, all alone, were sitting at a table, making up accounts & getting their tea: four decent looking young women, all drest alike in striped cotton gowns of 'fashionable' cut, and dainty aprons, and broidered capless hair. They civilly explained that I could still dine, in another room; and one of them rose and showed me the way to 'The Saloon', a large well-appointed room, in which were three more waitresses, drest in the same livery; all of them girls of twenty or so; and three men, dining or about to dine. One of the waitresses sat making up her reckoning; another came forward to wait on me; the third and prettiest was standing by one of the three diners, who bent over her, holding both her hands and saying to her such soft endearing insults as 'gentlemen' bestow on damsels who have grace but not position. The girl, accustomed perhaps to such treatment, received his caresses with passive simpering acquiescence; her companions took no notice; and neither he nor she was disturbed by the entrance of a stranger. The other two men, who were young, dined quietly, but afterwards went and sat by the waitresses and gently flirted with them awhile: the first man, who seemed about forty and looked like a dissipated dragoon, continued his attentions to all the three girls; kissing his hand to them, seizing their hands &

[4] By J. H. Foley.

their skirts, begging them to sit down by him. And after dinner, when the waitresses began to collect knives & forks & fold up tablecloths, he went and joined the group, and 'chaffed' them, making indecent allusions. They laughed and did not resent these; perhaps they did not understand them. I, however, made a demonstration of disgust, which silenced him: and with an audible 'Damn', he left the room, shaking hands with the girls, who evidently bore him no ill will.

Apparently, the City is not yet ripe for female waiters. . . .

At the end of April the diary contains a reference to 'our besotted housekeeper', Sarah Mitchell, and records a visit by Munby with the other principal tenant at 6 Fig Tree Court, Mr. Rees, to the Inner Temple Treasury, where they pleaded that she should be given one more chance (26 April). The Benchers, however, thought otherwise and dismissed her. 'Thus this unhappy woman, my housekeeper for 15 years, who was born and bred in this house and who has lived here rent free, is content in spite of many warnings to ruin her home and her prospects for the sake of getting drunk' (27 April).

The possible consequences of the incident did not dawn on Munby until a month later. Hannah then left her job; she had been unwell and had hurt her hand, and her mistress proved 'cruel and contrary, and wouldn't pay me because of my bad hand'. She called on Munby to tell him this news, before going to stay in Clerkenwell, where she had relatives and friends. 'But I sit down sad and sick at heart: oh, if she should really become ill! And when will this long tragedy be over, and I able to do justice to that divinely beautiful soul and to myself, without saddening the old age of others as dear as she is? The strain can hardly be borne much longer' (23 May).

A decorous week-end with Hannah at Southend followed, the Sunday being her thirty-ninth birthday. She was 'graceful and ladylike, reading Coleridge's Poems or the Psalms' (26 May).

Friday, 21 June. Walked with Julie Bovet in St. James's Park from 5 till 7, and had a long talk with her about my dearest Hannah and what I ought to do concerning her. Julie was sensible and severe, yet kindly as usual; and to no one else can I talk freely on that subject. Yet she too has her ladylike prejudices: 'Hannah is a good creature,' she says, 'but to a man so &c as you are, the manners of a maid of all work must always be revolting.' . . .

Mlle. Bovet may still have had hopes; she had tried hard to divert Munby from his infatuation; it was now too late. He was soon on his way

to Hannah's home at Shifnal, Shropshire, determined to 'do somewhat at last, towards bringing this long trial to an end' (27 June). When he returned, he found that at the Theodore Martins', 'the brilliant rooms, the music, the sumptuous elegant women lounging on sofas, brought out in fine contrast the humble simple homes and the hardworking folk of my Hannah and her kin' (2 July).

Munby had taken his final resolve. On 8 August he made the significant note: 'Went . . . to the Canterbury Office in Doctors' Commons, to ask about marriage licenses.' And by 11 August he was back at Clifton Holme, observing family prayers through the window from the garden—'my father, seated at the library table, reading aloud; my dear mother on her sofa, near; Fred and Carry in due prominence; the footman in his corner; and the five women servants, in Sunday cap & apron, seated a-row in the background.' A daunting prospect indeed for an eldest son who was summoning courage to announce that he wished to marry a maid of all work! No wonder he left it until the last possible moment, the night before his return to London, before he broached the appalling subject:

Monday, 26 August . . . Late at night, when the rest had gone to bed, I had a pathetic and terrible scene with my dear Father: for I had schooled myself at last, to tell him of my love for Hannah—begging him however not to tell my dearest Mother. What matters it that Hannah is pure, honourable, gracious and comely & intelligent, devoted to me now for 18 years? She is *a servant*: and the shame and horror of that fact, to me so simple, was to my honoured father so overwhelming, that I could not bear it; and comforted him, by crushing—not *her*, God forbid!—but my own hopes.

Three days later, Munby again met Julie Bovet, being once more grateful for 'her sympathy and interest, and her staid & judicious opinion'. On 3 September, he wrote 'a very long letter to my father, concerning Hannah'. What he said in the letter can only be conjectured; he must have avoided a promise not to marry, but may have assured his father he would be no more troubled with the matter. The immediate effect of the painful scene was to postpone the marriage for a few months. Meanwhile, Hannah was introduced to 6 Fig Tree Court.

Saturday, 14 September. I left Charing Cross by the tidal train for Paris: to begin an aimless wandering, which looks little pleasant for me, being alone, for it should have been my wedding tour. And she, my darling, who should have gone with me so, now only came to meet me at the station, as a servant, with my luggage. 'Do not kiss me' she whispered 'the folks are staring so!' Yes—and

their staring is hard to bear. She went back, to live alone (such is her wish) in my house till I return, and clean it & take care of it: and to enable her to be there, *I* must go away. . . . May she be blest, and kept from evil tongues, while I am away.[5] . . .

Despite the assertion above, the trip was hardly 'an aimless wandering' —Munby's excursions were never aimless—and he covered pages with an account of the damage he found in Paris after the siege. Moving on to the scene of the French defeat at Sedan, he discovered the cottage in which Napoleon III had met Bismarck to discuss his surrender.

Sunday, 22 September: Sedan . . . took the train at 12.10 for Donchéry, barely 3 miles off. It is a small quiet town, very little injured. Said the old postman, who walked in with me, the whole place was crowded with Prussians: they slept on straw littered in the streets: not a mouse 'pas un souris' had room to pass! The church . . . was filled with wounded French, after the battle. You pass out of the town by a worn wooden bridge, with a long weir slanting across the Meuse: then the double line of poplars begins, and the road to Sédan winds gently up the side of the hill above the river. On the top of that hill was 'Fritz'[6] and his staff. . . . Halfway up, as the road ascends, you pass two neat little stone houses, built as one, standing at the top of a little slope of grass and potatoes, unhedged, above the road. Neat white curtains shade the windows of the upper house; a geranium is in the parlour casement. Inside, a neat young wife sits sewing; in plain white cap and blue cotton gown. She rises and smiles, as I knock, and says Yes, Monsieur, this is the place. . . . And she took me round the end of the cottage, and opened a low backdoor. Just within it, was a narrow rude stair, up which we climbed. It led to a very neat first floor bedroom—'the only one we have, Sir'—with redbrick floor and white bed & duvet, and everything proper. And through that, was *the* room. A very small and narrow parlour, with no furniture save a handsome oak wardrobe, a small round oak table, two plain cottage chairs, all wood. The floor, uncarpeted, waxed and polished wood: a religious picture over the fireplace, a few little cups on the mantle shelf. Nothing else in the room. Through the clean figured muslin blinds of the two windows, there is a pleasant view, across the road and the poplars, of . . . the shining Meuse below, and in the distance, the far-reaching forest of the Ardennes. 'I showed them up the stair and through our bedroom, Monsieur,' said M^me^

[5] As Munby's train puffed out of Charing Cross, a red carpet was unrolled for the Prince and Princess of Wales. Hannah stayed to watch: 'I thought the Princess look'd pretty & pleasant but very delicate, but there was 5 or 6 little children, so no wonder. And they look'd delicate too, but the Prince was much stouter & bigger nor I expected to see after such an illness as he had lately. It did me good watching the crowd & to think o' the different grades o' people there is in the world, that even gentlemen had to bow & scrape to the royal family . . .' (Hannah's Diary).

[6] The Prussian Crown Prince Frederick, later Emperor Frederick III (1831–88), *Unser Fritz* to his troops.

Fournaise, 'the Emperor and Bismarck, that morning, the 2nd of September 1870: and here they sat in this room, on these two very chairs, at this little table. They sat here 3 quarters of an hour; and then M. Bismarck went away, and the Emperor was alone here for an hour or more. And then one of his Generals came, to see him; so I showed the General up, and when I knocked and opened this door, there was the Emperor sitting in that chair, leaning on the table, with his face between his hands. And then he got up, & went down with the General, and he walked up and down our potato-plot, and smoked; and then M. Bismarck came back, in his full uniform, with the Hussards de la Mort, and the Emperor drove away, over there to Bellevue. And when he left, he gave me these four napoléons: I would not spend them, not I! I had them framed, as you see.' For on the mantelshelf was a humble black frame, supporting the 4 gold coins, and a card below them, on which was written 'Donnés par S.M. Napoléon III à M^me^ Farnaise-Liban, le 2^me^ 7^bre^ 1870'.

This was the simple story; simply told by an unimpassioned woman with an honest face. 'People have offered me money for a chip of the table or a bit of paper from the walls,' she added; 'but I say No—this room shall be kept as it is, as long as *I* live.' . . .

Munby returned by train from Paris on Sunday, 29 September, looking out of the window for 'female signalmen':

. . . They are mostly the wives and daughters of workmen on the line: and, as everyone knows, they keep the smaller crossings, where country roads cross the line. From Boulogne or Calais to Paris, and again to the Belgian frontier, each woman wears the same livery; a low crowned hat of black tarpaulin, and a cloak of light blue cotton; a very effective dress when the wearer is young and comely and sunburnt, . . . and stands en militaire to salute the train, holding a furled scarlet flag. Today we must have passed 40 or 50 such women between Paris & Boulogne: some of them robust matrons, some brisk coquettish lasses, and some few elderly. Often before the train is out of sight, the signalwoman doffs her hat & cloak, and you can see her enter her cottage in the white cap & dark frock of ordinary life. . . .

The experiment of putting Hannah in charge of 6 Fig Tree Court had been successful; his rooms were cleaner and brighter than Munby had known them. Hannah had been advised by other workers in the Temple to 'try for the place' of housekeeper, but warned that 'the master is "a fussy old bachelor"' (29 September); meanwhile she was to live at Clerkenwell and come daily to the Temple. The master was eager to surrender his bachelor-status; yet found himself still bashful in talking of his hopes. He called, for instance, on his friend the Rev. J. E. Vaux, of the

Church Times: 'To him, as an experienced clergyman, I meant to confide the story of my Hannah, and meant to ask him to marry me. Yet—perhaps owing to his cheery jovial manner—I could not even approach the subject; and I came away, after 12, sad enough at having said nothing' (16 October).

Worried or not, Munby was always capable of being delighted by an unexpected discovery in his collector's field:

Friday, 18 October . . . Passing the shop of R. J. Bush, bookseller & publisher, Charing Cross, today, I saw in the window a one volume novel, prettily bound, and lettered 'The Rose of Avondale: E. M. Parker'. On it was a ticket, inscribed '*written by a Domestic Servant*'. Straightaway I went in. 'Yes,' said Mr. Bush, 'the author is really a female servant: she is a housemaid, and she is now in service at a gentleman's house at the western end of St James's Place, here in London. I went and saw her there in the housekeeper's room, and I found her in a housemaid's dress—as nice and modest a young woman of 23 or so as you need wish to see; just like any other servant in manner, only very quiet. Her name is Elizabeth Mary Parker; she comes from some village in Bucks, near Stowe, and her father keeps the village inn. She brought her M.S. to me, to ask my opinion: I told her it would cost so many pounds to print; she took time to think of it, and now she has brought it out at her own risk. I have sold 130 copies already, and the reviews speak highly of the book as being pure and gracefully written.' So said Mr. Bush: and for my part, I left his shop in a glow of satisfaction, which for a time overpowered the dull day and my own sadness . . . so far as I know, this is the first servant maid who has written a novel.

Saturday, 19 October . . . Went to Bush's and bought 'The Rose of Avondale'. Mr. Bush, continuing what he said yesterday, told me he felt sure the housemaid-authoress had had no help from any of her betters: as for her master and mistress, 'she begged me' said he 'not to let them know of the book, lest they should be displeased'. The M.S., he added, was written in a number of copybooks, of different sizes; in a good firm hand, like a man's. There were a few mistakes in spelling, & he corrected them; but wisely left the style and wording alone. When he went to see her, she made him a curtsy, and called him Sir, and behaved like any other modest servant . . .

On 21 October came 'the alarming news that our dear brother John is much worse and not likely to live'. John Forth Munby was 41, next to Munby in age: a solicitor in partnership with his father and a Captain in the local Volunteers. Munby went to Clifton Holme at once, to be told that 'Mr. Ball, the able & kindly surgeon', had found that 'congestion of the kidneys had supervened on a congested heart' (22 October). He and

his brothers were constantly at John's bedside until he died on 27 October. The funeral was unusually impressive. This was a tribute not only to an esteemed York family but also to a popular young man.

The burial took place at the village of Osbaldwick, where Munby's brother Joe had been buried five years before, and where the Forth family (to which Mrs. Munby belonged) owned several tombs. For the mourners this meant a journey of two or three miles through the city and out into the countryside beyond.

Wednesday, 30 October . . . Soon after 2 p.m., people from the town began to approach Clifton Holme: the hearse (without plumes) and coaches crept into the forecourt, & stood with various private carriages, waiting within the halfcircle of autumnal trees and shrubs; the brown or golden leaves of beech and ash and willow falling ever in the windy air. The 1st West Riding Rifles, 200 strong, marched in, with their officers; and with them, also in full uniform, came the officers of the Volunteer Artillery. The coffin (of oak) had been placed in the outer hall, with his shako and sword (he was a Captain) and belt laid on it: and in the forecourt, his own company, who were to form the firing party, presented arms as it was borne into the hearse. The remainder of the regiment, and also the City Police, stood in two lines, on either side of the carriage drive. At 2.30, we moved out into the village of Clifton: first the firing party, then the band, then the hearse, bearing his accoutrements and guarded by officers of the artillery and rifles, on foot; then 3 mourning coaches; then the volunteers and police, and then a long array of about 20 private carriages and cabs, containing Lord Mayor and Sheriff of York, clergy, and other acquaintance. I was not prepared for all this; but what impressed me still more, was the respect shown to the cortége. Every house for a mile or more had its blinds drawn; many shops in the chief streets of the town were closed; and all the way to the far end of York beyond the Castle, a dense crowd filled the streets. . . .

Such is the power of a wellspent life—of a character singlehearted, earnest, genial, and full of hearty love and simple selfsacrificing zeal.

For three days after his brother's funeral, Munby wrote nothing in his diary; a reaction to emotion that he also showed on several other occasions. But his bereavement may have had the effect of rationalising his attitude to his father, by making it absolutely impossible to reopen the subject of Hannah with him. Having returned to London, he pursued the central problem with increasing urgency. He was anxious, in his isolation, to be told by a responsible friend that Hannah was a worthy object of his affections, and that it was his duty to marry her. He himself had no doubts; but he badly needed support.

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Tuesday, 5 November. J. E. Vaux came to breakfast, and kindly took a paragraph about poor John, for the Church Times. Again I was halfminded—but not quite—to make him a confidant about Hannah.

FROM HERE TO END.

Monday, 11 November. In the Strand this afternoon, I met my dear old friend Robert Borland, just come up from his rectory in Devonshire. We dined together; I took him home with me to the Temple; and after tea, being sorely in need of such an aid, I told him the whole story of my darling Hannah. He with warm interest listened and suggested; and we sat till after 3 in the morning, considering what should be done, to reconcile truth and honour with necessity.

The worthy Borland was persuaded, not without difficulty, to have a talk with Hannah—'even *he*', wrote Munby, 'hesitated at first about meeting a common maidservant under such strange circumstances'. Hannah was equally reluctant; and Munby carefully 'posed' her for the interview.

Thursday, 14 November. It would take long to reproduce in words the strange scene of this evening, when for the first time I did what I have so often dreamed of doing—brought my Hannah face to face with one of my own best friends.

She sat by the table in my room, cutting a book—Warton's English Poetry—for me: she wore her old blacksilk 'frock', made spruce and newlike: the strap & buckle on her right wrist was not hidden by her clean white cuff; round her neck was a little frill of white net; her wavy brown hair was massed behind her ears, and rippled round her smooth white forehead. 'This is my Hannah,' I said: it was all that one could say: and she rose, as the embarrassed Rector approached, and made him a kitchen curtsy, but with the grace and flowing freedom of a drawingroom. 'How do you do? I have heard much of you,' said my dear old friend; and she said 'How do you do, Sir?' taking his offered hand with modest meekness. 'I have told Mr. Borland all about you, dear,' said I after a moment's pause. 'Yes, Massa!' she answered, still blushing, but admirably calm and self-contained: and then, coming forward, and speaking with evident effort what she had thought beforehand, she said to Borland 'Perhaps you can feel for me, Sir; I have been a servant all my life, and I never thought to be shown to any one like this! Massa and me have been alone together, and I have served him and enjoyed it: but if I am to be shown, the charm is gone!' 'No no—don't say that,' I interrupted, laying my hand on her arm: 'Ah, but it *is*,' she repeated, and drew back, and sat down at my bidding, & began again hurriedly to cut the book; taking refuge in *that*.

Then came a little forced talk, and then I left her alone with Borland; and he talked with her of his views as to me and herself, and she (as he told me) gained courage and told him *her* views. 'He is a very nice gentleman, and *very* gentle,' she said [to Munby] afterwards, 'but he doesn't understand *me*; gentlefolks *can't* understand a servant's feelings!' 'Could I have done all this' she said again 'if I hadn't made up my mind to please you, and put on a deal of *nerve*? But I

trembled when you made me *sit down*.' 'I hate to be stuck up before gentlefolks, & in my Sunday frock—how much better *this* is!' was her comment next day, as she knelt on the floor, in cotton frock, and apron, & white cap.

Hannah's own diary adds to our knowledge of the Borland interview. Munby 'look'd white & worried' when he introduced them, she says. Borland did not talk to her 'exactly on religion', as she had expected: 'it was more about duty to ones parents, & trying to *persuade* me into *almost* giving M. up cause his parents was so much against his having me . . . i couldn't of course tell him *what* a peculiar love ours had bin, but i said it was quite impossible not to go on loving one another, but that i never wanted it known—i wanted to be a help not a *hindrance* to M.' Hannah realised that Borland meant well, but felt that 'his advice & reasoning was little *good* to me, & i think he must o' thought so too, for he left off talking at the last almost abruptly. . . .' After the interview, Munby was discovered in his bedroom 'gone fast asleep, & i'd to call him': a detail omitted from Munby's version.

Hannah having been sent back to Clerkenwell in a cab, Borland 'spoke much of her beauty, & grace, and native modesty and refinement'; or at least, Munby said he did. But neither as a parson, nor as a friend, could Borland encourage the idea of marriage.

Saturday, 16 November. Borland came to breakfast with me, and talked over the scene of Thursday night, repeating his advice to me *not* to do what I desire—namely, marry,—but to live apart, or at any rate to house my darling here as a servant only. Ungrateful, it seems to me, and selfish, this would be . . .

Tuesday, 19 November . . . to 2 Bryanston Street, and dined with Litchfield. Only his wife & her brother George Darwin. Her father's new book on the expression of emotion[7] was on the table; and Mrs. L. said that often, at home, he used to make her and his other children go out in the garden and look steadfastly at some object, such [as] a particular twig on a tree, to study their faces as they looked. But often, she added, when her father in his rides had stopped to notice the expression of some crying child's face, he found himself saying 'Poor little thing!' and losing his power of observation in his sympathy with the object observed . . .

On the events of the next few days, Hannah's diary is more candid than Munby's. She tells us that on 23 November he showed her a marriage licence, made out in their names, and that she expressed the hope that neither of them would 'be sorry for it'. Her feelings at this point about the formal ties of marriage seem to have been less than enthusiastic; she had quite decided, however, that she could not stay with Munby at Fig Tree

[7] *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, by Charles Darwin (1872).

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Court unless they were married. On Tuesday, 26 November, she moved into the basement as his servant for the first time; and, feigning ignorance, questioned Mrs. Newton, the Temple laundress, about Munby: 'Mr. Munby was a good payer, & she seem'd to like him only said he was very fidgetty & old maidish. i knew that, but i was glad she spoke well of him. . . .'

The same day, however, the couple had a tremendous row. Soon after greeting her on arrival, Munby rang his bell. Hannah thought: 'well that is showing off certainly,' and went upstairs in a towering rage. She lost her temper completely when Munby—always alive to the 'security' aspect of their situation—rebuked her for not having called him 'Sir' within hearing of a lad who was clerk to his barrister neighbour Mr. Rees. If he 'tantalized me in that way again i would leave him whether we was married or not', Hannah told him indignantly. She added in her diary that 'my passion was only the effect of love'; but Munby had been seriously upset. The quarrel was not made up for several days.

Munby now took Hannah's younger sister Ellen into his confidence, and the marriage became a more practical proposition: he told her about the 'horrible scene', but does not otherwise allude to it in his diary.

Saturday, 30 November . . . by 2.30,[8] to the Temple, where I had appointed that Ellen Cullwick should meet me. Ellen was at first a scullion; but now at 33, is a skilled and trusted nurse, earning £20 or £25 a year . . . of a far commoner type than Hannah, but much more tractable. . . . Hannah retired to the kitchen, whilst I had a serious earnest conversation with her sister, for more than two hours; going through the whole story, up to the horrible scene of Tuesday last. A good religious maiden she is, and it was a relief to tell her all; though we could settle nothing, as yet. . . .

Saturday, 21 December . . . Coming home at 2.30, I went down into the kitchen, and there I found my Hannah, 'in her dirt', looking like a chimneysweep. . . . 'I'm blacking myself, Massa,' said she, 'to do the stairs.' For it was part of the programme, that she should scour the stairs 'in her dirt', so as to look as unattractive as might be, in that public employment: and though she had cleaned the kettle, and scoured the stone floor of the kitchen, which was still wet, yet all this, and more, had not made her black enough. And still, she looked noble, even in rags and dirt, and in a kitchen. 'Where shall I find a clean place to kiss you, dear?' said her master: 'Nowhere, I think!' said the sooty maid, and yet turned, and showed a ruddy spot on her black cheek, which perhaps she had kept on purpose. Not long after, upstairs in my room, I heard the clank of her pail, and the sound of the scrubbing brush on the ancient stairs; and would have gone out to see—but my tenant Thornbury was in his chamber . . .

[8] After a morning's work at the office.

Half an hour later, there was a tap at my door; and enter a tall and graceful young woman, with soft brown hair massed around her white forehead, her bright and handsome face flushed rose with recent exertion. Nothing but her clean white apron, and the simple make of her neat green gown, showed that she was a servant—for she wore no cap. Could this be the tattered grimy drudge whom I had seen blacking her face in the kitchen? The very same, Sir! and she was come up to join her sister Ellen, whom I had sent for, and with whom I was having a talk about all these things. Ellen modestly chose a distant chair by a window. . . . Comely & rosy is her honest face; but it lacks the highbred air and the brightness of her sister's. She too is a servant; and she says 'Let *me* do it, Sir' or 'Let me help you, Sir', instead of expecting to be waited on: she represents the nobler women of simpler times and countries than ours. Hannah goes down to the kitchen again, to prepare tea for herself and her sister: and I say at parting 'and Ellen, whenever it *can* be, you must be her bridesmaid.' 'Thank you, Sir,' says Ellen the nurse, and meekly takes my offered kiss.

The Munby family Christmas of 1872 was a subdued festival, owing partly to the death of brother John, and partly to the financial anxieties of 'the father', who complained incessantly about his expenses.

Hannah had been officially installed as housekeeper in Fig Tree Court, and Munby remained at Clifton Holme into the new year.

1 January, 1873: York . . . In my kitchen at the Temple, my servant Hannah cleans and scrubs alone, and waits for me: she, most noble and devoted of women, who has loved and served me faithfully and purely for nearly nineteen years, and is still, in the world's eyes, only my hired maid of all work, and is treated as such by every one but me—nay, and by me also; for does she not wait on me and clean my boots and sleep on a servant's bed in the kitchen? Too late, now, to make a lady of *her*, in spite of her sweet highbred face and manners: but not too late to do her justice somehow.

'Not too late to do her justice. . . .' The thought must have been continually present in Munby's mind during his leave-taking from York on 4 January ('much distressed by the perpetual selftormenting of my father, and by the anxiety of my dear mother on his account'); and during a two-day visit to Turvey, Bedfordshire, where his brother George was Rector. But he could tell none of them his secret.

Monday, 6 January . . . I left Turvey Rectory at 8.20 a.m. and drove along the pleasant country road to the station. To Bedford by train, by 9, and thence to London by 10.30—one hour late.

'Is the servant upstairs?' I say to the man who carries home my luggage. 'Yes Sir,' says he: and a minute afterwards, the servant, bare armed as she is and wearing her large white cap and apron and her cotton frock, is clasped in her

master's arms. She has decked the room with holly and winter flowers, and has made ready a breakfast: and says she is well and happy. . . .

Tuesday, 7 January . . . the United University Club at 5.30, and dined there, and read there till ten, and then home. Hannah had already gone down to her kitchen to bed, leaving a note for 'Massa'.

Wednesday, 8 January. Went to Gloucester Street Pimlico, to see my invalid colleague Digby Green. He was writing a note in his cosy sanctum, and a smartly drest young woman was sitting before him on the edge of a chair. She rose, seeing me, and retired with the note. 'Excuse me—she is *only a servant*' said D.G; 'she has been sent to bring me these grapes and this jar of—have some?' '*Only a servant*'? I went home at seven to dinner, and was received by one who also is only a servant.

The diary entries for the succeeding days are sparse. On Sunday, 12 January, appears a note: 'to Clerkenwell church.' Tuesday, 14 January, was a 'fair grey day, with sungleams'; Munby's recorded office hours on this day were peculiar, 11.45 to 6.0, but the need to work late is explained by the concluding words of the entry: 'To Clerkenwell by 9 a.m.' The rest of the space allotted to 14 January in the diary was left blank.

The marriage register of the parish church of St. James, Clerkenwell, is more informative. It records that in the church on 14 January, 1873, Arthur Joseph Munby, a barrister, was married by licence to Hannah Cullwick 'of this parish'. The 'rank or profession' of the bride is omitted; but there are Munby-ish descriptions of the fathers of the couple, Joseph Munby appearing as an 'Esquire' and Charles Cullwick as a 'Husbandman'.

Munby and Hannah were not married by the vicar, Robert Maguire—a Protestant pamphleteer, who would hardly have been to Munby's taste—but by the curate, the Rev. John Henry Rose. The witnesses were Martha Ellen Cullwick (the sister who had been asked to be bridesmaid); Mary Ann Cullwick (another sister, a shopgirl known as Polly); and Elizabeth Morris (a cousin who was a lady's maid).

The wedding invitations were confined to Hannah's relatives and friends; a small gathering, in this large eighteenth-century church which could hold 1500 people.

Munby was 44 and Hannah 39 when they were married. They were both too old to be shaken out of habit and routine. On the wedding day Munby insisted on her calling him 'Arthur': Hannah did so once, but never again—he was to be 'Massa' to the end, though she sometimes allowed herself an affectionate diminutive, 'Moussiri'.

The next day, Munby took his Latin class at the Working Women's College as usual. It was the first night of term; they were doing the *Aeneid*. On Thursday, the 16th, he went to his club from the office, then dined with his Pearson cousins in Bayswater. Outwardly, his strenuous bachelor social life continued, though a shrewd observer might have noted that he tried to get home a little earlier; inwardly, everything was changed. Henceforth Munby was not nearly so eager to write long diary descriptions of literary parties or public events. He had a source of endless inspiration at home; in the tragi-comedy of a secret marriage unknown to his family—and revealed only to Robert Borland, Henry James, and later Vernon Lushington, among his personal friends.

The facts of his Clerkenwell marriage are not stated by Munby in the diary; to all appearances he was turned into a married man gently, silently, as by a conjuring trick. Only after three days does an oblique reference appear:

Friday, 17 January . . . To shops in Regent Street . . . and in a milliner's gorgeous window, saw certain dresses at which a crowd of envious women were gazing; bridal dresses, not in themselves beautiful, but costly and cumbrous: whereat I smiled sardonically, remembering the simple servant's 'frock' in which my Hannah was married. 'What a deal it must cost gentlefolks to get married, Massa!' said she, sitting by me this evening in her white cap & apron, and eating her supper off her knees (her own way) whilst I dined on her providings, at seven o'clock.

Thirty years later, Munby placed in an envelope no less than thirty-six sonnets he had written to Hannah, most of them copied in her handwriting. They include the following:

> How well I recollect our Wedding Day!
> She did her black work with a beating heart;
> Then wash'd herself, and own'd a servant's part
> Waiting on me, and then she went away
> Down to the kitchen bedroom, where she lay
> Among the pots, alone and quite apart;
> There doff'd her servile dress, and with meek art
> For once did make herself a little gay:
> Her long dark cloak: a red stuff gown quite new;
> Her black straw bonnet with white cap: Oh no,
> No gloves, no flowers! 'Massa, shall I do?'
> She cries; 'I have no looking glass, you know!
> 'Now, I am off! And mind you, all my life
> 'I shall be servant still to you, as well as wife.'

Saturday, 18 January . . . At 2 p.m. I took Hannah from London Bridge to Dorking and Holmwood; for it had been a brilliant morning, and we were to sleep at Ockley. But leaving Holmwood station about 3.15, the sky was clouded and wind and rain approaching: so we simply walked by the field roads, under the lee of the fair brown woods, round to the pretty hamlet and picturesque church of Holmwood, and then the 3 miles back to Dorking, across the Common, in driving rain. We had good fare and warmth at the White Horse, & Hannah played her part very fairly, by dint of natural sweetness. But now that she was drest in black silk, her shapely hands looked somewhat large and laborious, and her dear complexion somewhat coarse: whereas her face looks ladylike and her hands delicate, when she is in her own servant's dress. C'est sélon. We returned to London, to Charing Cross, by 8.

Sunday, 19 January . . . In all day, among my books. In the forenoon, Tarrant the armourer-sergeant came to the door, and saluting me, said 'Oh if you please Sir I came to ask if your servant may do some chops for Capt. Batten.' My servant? He meant my wife. And soon after one o'clock, I went down to the kitchen, and found her busy doing them . . . singing at her work, for joy, while smoothfaced ladies, coming from church, swept across the courtyard above her. 'I'm *cook* today, Massa!' said she, smiling; 'and I enjoy it. And Tarrant's going to give me a shilling for doing it' . . .

. . . I went to Lincoln's Inn, and dined in Hall . . . home by 8, and found my Hannah . . . on her knees relighting the parlour fire; wearing her cap & apron with her black silk 'frock'; and her sleeves down in token that it was Sunday evening: for a servant bares her arms for work and hides them at times of leisure, whilst a lady covers hers in the morning time, and bares them at evening, for show. In due course Hannah had her supper; but insisted on going down to the kitchen & eating it there; and returned almost directly. She is so used to getting her meals anyhow and feeding on broken victuals, that I can hardly persuade her to eat leisurely and sit down by me: even now, she acts on the pathetic assumption that only my leavings are for *her*! She read to me a few chapters of Thomas à Kempis, and the Psalms for the day; and so to bed . . .

Sunday, 26 January. For reasons of prudence as well as of courtesy, I asked three men to breakfast with me today: my neighbours Josiah Rees and Capt. Batten of the 8th. Foot, and Colonel Pearson. Of course I consulted my Hannah first; and she highly approved: 'I can wait on them quite nicely,' said she who ought to have presided and been waited upon. But when I say 'How I wish you could sit with us at the table!' she answers ironically 'Oh yes, I fancy I see myself sitting down to breakfast with four gentlemen and pouring out tea for them—oh Massa, how *can* you be so silly!' Such is her view, who used to look on a parlour-maid's place as something too smart and fine for her. And so she brought the breakfast up, and set out the dishes, and cleared them away; silently and meekly;

unnoticed, like any common servant, and drest like a servant in cotton frock and apron: but she did not stay in the room to wait; the other was trying enough, but that would have been intolerable. That is one thing my darling wife did for me. Not quite unnoticed, however. 'What a very nice person your servant seems to be!' said Capt. Batten. I slipped down afterwards to the kitchen, where she was washing up, and kissed & thanked her. 'You are very welcome!' said this strange sweet spouse.

. . . to Warwick St., Eccleston Square, and sat with Walter Severn & his clever children & his sweet dainty wife. . . . Walter and I went by rail to Herne Hill, and by 6 arrived at his brother Arthur's; a large substantial old fashioned house among gardens and cedars; the house in which Ruskin was born. For Arthur's wife, Joan Agnew, is Ruskin's cousin; and a pleasant genial lassie she is. The house is full of Turners and other beautiful things, gifts of Ruskin's; and we spent a pleasant evening in talk, till 9, when Walter returned with me to town and went to the Cosmopolitan, and I home by ten, to my darling, whom I found in a clean white cap, with tea ready for her & me.

The sleeping arrangements of Munby and Hannah in Fig Tree Court (a good biblical name for the scene of Munby's great experiment) were unusually complicated for a newly married pair. Munby was the principal tenant at number 6, a house consisting of two floors and a semi-basement. He held four rooms comprising the whole of the first floor, subletting one room to Mr. Thornbury, and had a controlling share in the basement kitchen; but in between, on the ground floor, were chambers let to Josiah Rees, 'revising barrister'; who may have sublet[9] part of them to Captain Batten, of the 8th Foot. All this introduced an element of hazard, especially when Rees spent the night in his chambers, which fortunately was not his regular practice.

In the weeks before the marriage, Hannah had slept in the basement, like other Temple servants. Munby, not unnaturally, now wanted her to sleep upstairs. This she usually did; but she was liable to fits of diffidence or caution, which reinforced her instinctive servant's tendency to revert to the truckle-bed downstairs. But she seems to have used Munby's sitting-room quite freely in the evenings and at weekends.

They were happy, despite the difficulties—perhaps partly because of them. But for the next four and a half years, during their life together in the Temple, Hannah's wedding ring was not to be often in evidence.

Saturday, 1 February. In the morning, came a man to measure the bedroom for new furniture.[1] Hannah, drest as usual in clean cotton frock and white cap

[9] The Inner Temple records do not indicate sub-tenancies. [1] A larger bed?

& apron, lets him in, and stands by to advise: for I had said 'Hannah, you had better stay' and she replies 'Yes Sir'. A harmless ruse! . . .

Monday, 3 February. Home at 6.15 to dinner, and sat with Hannah till 9, and then dressed. 'How I wish *you* could be drest up too, and come with me!' '*Me*! What nonsense, Massa—I wouldn't be stuck up so, for worlds!' answers she, who has long since chosen the better part, fireside love and homely duty. I went in the snow & sludge to Mortimer Street, to a conversazione of the new Anglo Oriental Society. . . . I walked home by twelve, & went in to see Rees; who made to me an astounding proposal: namely, that I would allow 'my servant' to serve my neighbour Capt. Batten too! This morning, reading to me in Genesis the story of Noah, Hannah stopped and exclaimed 'Dear me, what a mess the earth must have been in when the Flood was over!'

Tuesday, 4 February . . . to St. Luke's Road Westbourne Park, in the wild Bayswater desert, to dine with Tyndall. . . .

Home by twelve . . . Hannah, gone to bed, had left me a loving note . . . signed 'your affectionate servant and wife, Hannah.' 'I hardly like to write *that* word' added the sweet letter 'only you told me to.' Alas!

Sunday, 9 February . . . 'How well Hannah looks!'—said armourer-sergeant Tarrant yesterday, making his compliments to her at the kitchen door: 'I declare she looks ten years younger than when she came to live here.' 'Yes' answered dame Newton the laundress, 'we shall be seeing her have a beau, soon!' Hannah, standing by, simply says, 'Oh, never fear!' . . .

Tuesday, 18 February 'Capt. Batten came up last night when you was out,' said my sweet wife this morning, after her first kiss; 'and I know he was fidgetting about *me*.' How so, dear? 'Well, he wants you to let me light his bedroom fire of a morning and clean his boots. . . .' 'Oh, I shouldn't mind going into his bedroom when he was in bed, a bit—you know I used often to have to do it for gentlemen when I was underhousemaid, and quite a girl, so I might well do it now I'm a married woman! And I should like very well to clean his boots; you know I clean *yourn* every day; and I said to Tarrant "If you put 'em out I'll clean 'em with pleasure, along with mine".'

What shall one think of the pure and lofty humility that is ready to do such things for her husband's acquaintances, and had rather do them than be openly acknowledged as her husband's wife?[2] . . .

Saturday, 22 February. In the afternoon I went to the Burlington Fine Arts Club to see the collection of George Mason's[3] works. . . . Mason's three great

[2] A somewhat disingenuous remark, considering that Munby was then only too anxious to keep the marriage a secret from most of the world; but it is hardly surprising that his thinking on the subject was confused.

[3] George Heming Mason (1818–72); A.R.A., 1869.

pictures were there—the Girls Dancing by the Sea, the Evening Hymn, and the Harvest Home; and it was a blessing to see them again: but besides these, there were majestic Roman peasant women, driving oxen, & the like; and above all, there were scores of pictures of English rural life, in North Staffordshire & elsewhere; fields and ponds and woods & wolds, country girls like my Hannah, in hoodbonnets & cotton frocks like hers; village children, horses, cattle, geese: and sweet sunshine of all hours, and exquisite grace and insight. Here, rendered in loveliest colour, were the common things and ways that I have beheld with such dreamlike delight, in real life, all over rural England. What pleasure to look on such pictures! If only She had been with me. . . .

I came home at 6.30 to dinner. In the evening, Hannah (in white cap and apron and green frock) read to me . . . the longer we live together, the more I wish 'to take her away from her slaving', and the more I regret that with all her intelligence, she does not share such a wish.

Friday, 28 February . . . at seven I walked with Hannah to Farringdon Street station, to meet her cousin Elizabeth Morris, whom I had commissioned to make for Hannah the only bonnet at all 'fashionable' which she has ever had. The good ladysmaid duly arrived with her bundle; and after shaking hands with her, I despatched the cousins to Clerkenwell . . .

Thursday, 4 March . . . Sat with him[4] till 10.30, and then home; and found Hannah (who had been entertaining her sister Ellen) gone to bed—in the kitchen, in spite of her promise this morning that she would continue to sleep upstairs. So hard it seems to make this sweet strange servant understand that she is my wife.

Wednesday, 12 March . . . Dined & sat an hour with Hannah: then at 8 to my Latin class, the last time. For the term is ended, and the class so reduced and so uncertain that I have determined to close it. The three remaining students . . . were very sorry, they said, and would gladly resume their Virgil with me hereafter. So we shook hands all round, and I left the Working Women's College, and walked home by ten to Hannah.

Munby tried to get out of town whenever possible at the week-ends; he was as familiar with mid-Victorian Gillingham and Chislehurst and Edgware, as he was with his favourite Surrey countryside. Delight in these long exploratory walks did not vanish with marriage, and he persistently urged Hannah to accompany him—mostly without success at first, her usual plea being that she was too busy housekeeping and cleaning. 'So I left for the country . . . with the feeling (as always now) that I am leaving

[4] Robert Borland, who was ill in Manchester Street.

my best behind,' wrote Munby on 15 March; and again, a week later: 'I wished that Hannah had been willing to come with me, instead of plodding through her Saturday errands in town.' And at those fashionable gatherings that Munby attended at Aubrey House and elsewhere his thoughts strayed continually to the unacceptable Mrs. Munby in the Temple. He was thankful to 'live in this quiet place, and have my chosen treasure here', he noted on 24 March: 'After dinner, we talked for hours, she sitting between my knees, of the long fellowship of nineteen years.'

Thursday, 27 March . . . After dinner, I with some difficulty persuaded Hannah to let me take her to the Albert Hall to hear the 'Creation'—which she had never heard or heard of. So, when she had cleared away, I helping her, she put on her new bonnet, her best things, her gloves—for now she wears gloves at times—and we went by rail to South Kensington. She enjoyed the music, enjoyed the photographs that hang round the great gallery: tender and charming she looked, and I contrived that the illuminati around should not notice her ignorance of the wellknown airs. When we came out, she whispered 'What a deal of money it must take to pay all them sing-gers!' Shropshire fashion. We got home by eleven.

Friday, 28 March . . . spent a long evening with my Hannah; part of the time, combating her strange fancies about herself: as, that she is 'not good enough' for one who is not worthy of *her*. Oh the 'divine humility of Love'! But it is my fault of other years, hard to be amended now, that this sweet soul has been brought so low in her own eyes. *That* was not what I meant, by those strange trials.

Thursday, 3 April . . . Home to Hannah . . . sitting in her red frock & white apron and neat cap, sewing; with the cat asleep on the hearthrug, and the kettle singing, and the old poets and other worthies looking down on her from the shelves around, and the evening sun shining in on the linnet in its cage and the myrtles & primroses growing in the window. I sat down and looked thankfully on this sweet homelike picture, and on her the central figure. . . . She told how she went to the Treasury yesterday & paid my rent, 'and the gentlemen never noticed me—and I said "Sir" to them, of course;' and how today, the tax-gatherer said 'You live in the kitchen, don't you?' and she—my wife—said 'Yes, Sir.' Not always! . . .

Saturday, 5 April. To the Haymarket Stores, & home by 3 p.m., & found Hannah getting ready. She had had a busy morning: 'I've cleared away' said she 'and made the bed, & dusted, & cleaned the rooms, & washed up, and fed the bird' and much more 'and I've cleaned the kettle, and cleaned two pairs of boots,

and I've scoured the stairs on my knees:' and they were still wet with her scrubbing, when she came down them, drest in her new bonnet & best clothes, and looking like a lady. She and I went down the river together, to give her fresh air without fatigue, and walked awhile in the Park at Greenwich, and came back by the tramway, through the dreary faded suburbs . . .

Sunday, 6 April. After prayers and reading of the Bible, Hannah went about her household work, upstairs and down: she brought up full cans of water, she dug coals and filled the heavy scuttle & carried it up from the cellar, not allowing me to help her. Rees returned from Circuit last night, and I sat with him awhile, talking over Lord Selborne's Bill.[5] This morning he met her on the kitchen stairs: she drest in her Sunday 'frock' of green stuff, & her clean white apron and large picturesque white cap. 'I like him—he is a kind gentleman,' said my Hannah: 'he said to me "Well, Mrs Cullick, how well you look!" and I thanked him and said "Yes Sir, but I've had a touch o' the rheumatics since you was away".' And so she had her dinner in the kitchen, refusing absolutely to have it upstairs: and helped me to begin a catalogue of my library; sitting by me with sweet eager face and saying 'It's nice—I can help you, and learn something at the same time.' Yes, indeed! And she tried on her new dress; grey and black, made in fashionable wise by a milliner (for once) to go out with me in; came gracefully into the room in it, saying 'Now I must try and think that I'm a lady!' But she took it off, and put on her humbler gown to go to the Temple Church in this afternoon, & from thence to her Clerkenwell friends to spend the evening . . .

My neighbour Captain Batten came up the other morning, with a posy of violets which he had kindly brought me from Dorsetshire; and tonight he was at the U.U. Club, & walked home with me. I did not ask him in, knowing that she whom he had seen as a servant was sitting quietly by the tea table in the parlour: but notwithstanding, I found that she had purposely retired into the back room. 'Oh, why didn't you ask him up?' said this meek darling, 'he would never have known!' 'What, dear—turn my wife out for the sake of an acquaintance?'

Monday, 7 April . . . Home to dinner at 6.15, and heard from Hannah the simple story of her day. The ancient kitchen of this house, in which she is supposed to live (and did live, before her marriage) is so damp now, that I wrote to the surveyor about it. The surveyor came; 'he is quite a gentleman, and he never noticed me,' said Hannah: never noticed what she was, because she wore a cotton frock and a cap, & had bare arms, and said 'Sir' to him: oh, the disguise is complete then. And this morning came the foreman, and she went down with him before I was aware. 'Hannah!' I called over the banisters, making believe to speak as a master. 'Yes Sir!' my sweet wife replied, with ready tact. 'Is Robert there?' 'Yes Sir,' she said again; and while I talked with him, she went

[5] For the reform of the judicature.

down to the kitchen to await him there. Later, two labourers came, and took up some flags in the kitchen floor. And what did *you* do? I enquired. 'Oh, I was with them, at work; I raked up the ashes with my hands, and I knelt on the hearth and cleaned the kettle!' And now this evening, what a contrast to that drudge was the sweet and noble woman who lay back in my easy chair, her dark uncovered hair rippling round her handsome mobile face, while in musical intelligent tones she read to me The Lovers of Gudrun![6] Yet even so, her old life was not forgotten: for when I had helped her at dinner, she said 'This is the first time I ever remember eating the wing of a fowl.' What? said I—then what parts *have* you eaten? 'Only the bones,' said my meek wife: 'we never expect to get anything else'—we common servants!

Munby and Hannah had looked forward to staying at the King's Arms, Ockley, over Easter, for 'our honeymoon'.

Good Friday, 11 April: Ockley . . . When I drew the white curtains from our leaded lattice, and showed a dull grey morning with the sun steeped in wet cloud, Hannah said 'Ah, did you never notice that it's *always* dull on Good Friday morning, and generally bright on Easter Sunday morning? *I* have noticed it every year, and it's well known.' So, yesterday in the train, when she was eagerly noticing every trait of Spring & the Country, as we went along, suddenly she cried with happy face 'Oh, luck, luck! the lambs!' They were the first lambs she had seen this year, and she *saw their faces first*. That is good luck . . .

Saturday, 12 April: Ockley . . . 'How nice it is to be like a lady!' said my darling this morning, apropos of her leisurely toilet, her cold bath, her clean unsoiled hands, her general sense of ease and gracefulness. Yet she was careful to remark that she is as ready as ever to clean grates, or scour stairs. . . .

Easter Sunday, 13 April: Ockley . . . One thing to be noted in the Dorking country, is the great number of smockfrocks. Sir F. Palgrave, in 1837, spoke of the smockfrock as a thing all but extinct: yet in 1873, here at Ockley, men of all ages wear them, and lads, and little boys: brown or purple smocks, worn even on Sunday and at church, worn with corduroys and leggings. Another thing, is the wood fires. Besides the scent of flowers and the fresh air coming through the latticed window, the parlour in a morning is piquant with resinous odour of billets, cut up under the orchard behind the house, and laid on the fire with the bark on. We have a store on the red brick hearth, and burn scarce anything else. 'You must ring for Harriet, dear, to bring some more wood,' say I last

[6] A version of an Icelandic Saga, from William Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*. Munby had also been reading Morris's *Love is Enough* (1872) and quoted the title with feeling.

night, going out awhile. 'Ring for Harriet, Massa?' says my darling, looking up with a meaning smile: '*me* ring?' Me, a servant all my life, used to be rung for by others—am I now to have the honour of ringing for somebody else?

Ah yes, indeed! And to see her going to bed, afterwards, gliding gracefully out of the room, candle in hand, and smiling a sweet 'Goodnight, Mrs Wickens!' to the stout redfaced landlady, who looks up respectfully, and answers 'Goodnight, Ma'am,' with the deference of one who sees before her a *real* lady, this time.

Oh, Mrs Wickens! Do you know that my neighbour wants to hire this tall gracious lady, to clean his boots? . . .

Hannah's religious education had been supervised by Munby almost from the time of their first meeting; indeed, it was he who had arranged her confirmation. Their married life at Fig Tree Court was now regulated by morning and evening prayer, while Hannah assumed the task of reading the entire Bible aloud to her husband in daily instalments, a feat which was to take two years to accomplish.

At Ockley this Easter, they went to church on Good Friday, and again on Easter Sunday: 'the first Communion that I had made with Hannah since our marriage' (13 April). On Easter Monday they returned to town, but separated at London Bridge station—to avoid being seen approaching Fig Tree Court together, bearing the spoils of their holiday.

Easter Monday, 14 April . . . Hannah went home in a cab, taking with her a rushbasket full of Ockley eggs, laid soft in Ockley moss and lichen; and her great basket of primroses & violets, and her splendid posy of daffodils, and our luggage; all which she carried indoors, unaided and unnoticed.

I went on by train to Charing Cross.[7] Home by the Embankment at 5: and found there, not the elegant lady of this morning, but a servant, drest in a homely cotton frock and coarse apron and large white cap, and barearmed and hardworking.

'Mrs Wickens nor Harriet wouldn't say Ma'am to me *now*, Massa!' says she. . . . She has been sweeping and dusting all day, doing the work of four days: has found the cat & the bird delighted to see her again, and has filled the room with her flowers, arranged in bowls and baskets and pots, in the window, on the piano & the table—everywhere.

'How much nicer it is' says she 'to get your dinner and my own, than to sit still and see it brought, and be waited on!' And after dinner, she reads 'Our Village'[8] to me, a reminiscence of our happy visit to Ockley.

[7] To go to his office, surprisingly; but the Bank Holiday Act of 1871 was not yet fully operative in the modern sense.

[8] By Mary Russell Mitford.

Monday, 21 April . . . After dinner, I went to the Working Men's College in Great Ormond Street, to the general meeting, held in the new round room, which was densely crowded with students. T. Hughes presided, and he & Litchfield spoke first, and then R. W. Emerson[9] the American writer said a few commonplace words. A tall gaunt man, he is, with a hatchet face, a large nose, heavy eyebrows, shrewd mobile mouth; a head well developed behind, & covered with thin piebald hair. Such is he whose book on the soul[1] exercised me twenty years ago.

This morning, my Hannah had to get up again at 6, to my annoyance, to let the workmen into the kitchen . . . when I got home to dinner, I found her in her green best 'frock' and clean apron, and wearing a wonderful mobcap, with a border of antique lace and a violet ribbon: just such a cap as was worn by country girls about 1820, and is now coming into fashion again, for ladies. But she did not make it from the fashion books: she made it, today, from a picture I had shown her in Bloomfield's 'Wild Flowers', of a maidservant at church . . . looking charming in that picturesque cap, she rose, made an arch curtsy, and said laughingly 'In our courting days, Sir, you used to be more punctuall' . . .

Wednesday, 23 April . . . After dinner and a quiet fireside talk, I dressed to go to the P. A. Taylors': and through the doorway watched my wife as she sat at her supper—bare-armed, and in cap & apron and cotton frock; for she had not 'cleaned herself'. It is hard to make her eat with me; to persuade her that she must not keep the worst for herself and live on broken meats. The other day I made her eat a sweetbread: it was the first time she had ever done so. 'How nice it is! But it's too grand for *us*'—for servants. And then, in my evening dress, with her kitchen frock, her servant's cap, pressed close to me, how much more noble she seemed than those whom I was going to meet: worthier of jewels and finery, and yet happy in the thought that she knows nothing of either, and is free from such restraints. 'How I wish I could show you there!' 'I'm sure *I* don't,' says she, laughing: 'I should *hate* to be shown!'

It was a large & pleasant party, at Aubrey House. Among others, I had some talk with Miss Lydia Becker,[2] who, I find, thinks as I do about female labour, and respects the Lancashire pit girls and their work. Home by twelve.

Friday, 2 May. Hannah again jumped out of bed at 6 a.m., unbeknown to me, and ran downstairs to let the workmen in. And then she told me a thing that

[9] Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82), philosopher and poet.

[1] Probably the essay 'Nature' of 1836.

[2] Lydia Ernestine Becker (1827–90), the suffragist and editor of the *Women's Suffrage Journal*. Munby had written a letter to the *Manchester Guardian*, in support of the Wigan pit girls, as recently as 18 April. He firmly defended their wearing of trousers, and concluded that 'things have come to a pretty pass, when so-called Liberals seek to prevent one half of the human race from earning their bread in any honest way they choose'. (MS. in Yale University Library.)

strangely illustrates the difference which habit and use may make, in characters essentially alike. Yesterday, she said, the workmen were talking 'free' to her; one said 'I wonder you're not afraid to sleep down here, all alone'; and she 'Why should I? What have I to be afraid of?' and he 'Oh, some one might fetch you away!' and she 'Oh, I'm big enough and strong enough; it would take a strong one, to fetch *me* away!' And when was all this? Oh, said she in a shamefast [*sic*] whisper, 'while I was cleaning: *I cleaned the closet, before them all*!' Here is a woman graceful in person and manner, as a lady; pure, modest, naturally refined and sweet; shrinking from moral evil and moral foulness; knowing also that marriage has made her a lady, and fresh from her ladylike experiences at Easter; yet, because she was bred a servant and is used to it, she goes among rough men as an equal, and in their presence undertakes the most disgusting labour. True, she knows that in her husband's eyes, *any* labour, done by her, is noble and is sanctified. . . .

Monday, 5 May . . . Mr. Thornbury, my tenant, calls today: finds my Hannah, in her kitchendress, standing at the washtub; condescends to ask how she is; makes a sign to her to pick up his letters from the floor; 'so I said, "I'm very well, thank you Sir," and I knelt down and picked them up for him.' All which she duly tells me afterwards, seated in the easy chair, dainty in black silk & drawingroom cap, her fair head leaning back in repose, her sweet mouth smiling at the contrast: for, is she not a servant during the day, and a lady in the evening? and fulfils either part so well, that for the time she seems incapable of the other.

Wednesday, 7 May. To shops in Regent Street & elsewhere, buying glass for Hannah's flowers, and china for her and myself: and home to dinner at seven. Miss Mitford's Our Village gives me opportunities of explaining many long words, bits of French, and proper names, to its fair reader. 'Anomaly', for instance. 'What is an *anomaly*?' she asks. Well—something out of the usual course; something you wouldn't expect, or that seems out of place. 'Ah' says she, 'then *I'm* an anomaly, sitting here in this room, and reading to you!' Blessed anomaly!

Today the workmen have finished the kitchen. I went down to see it, now clean and dry and cheerful, its damp flags replaced by a new boarden floor. And there were the flower boxes which the workmen have made for Hannah; all for nothing, and just to please her. It seems that she has taught all the folk about her to call her simply 'Hannah', just as she was called in service. 'I hope Hannah will be comfortable in her kitchen now; when does she get into it?' says my neighbour the Revising Barrister to me this evening. He little knows that I know of his 'goings on': how, the other day, he attempted to fling his arm round her waist and kiss her bonny face, and was only prevented by her wifely indignation and her strong right arm . . .

This operatic marriage fulfilled a poet's dream. Munby revelled in its implications. He had long understood that his most ambitious poem would have to be acted out in real life; and now, in justice to Hannah (and himself), he gladly assumed the task of describing their romantic union in pre-Raphaelite detail, with a full selection of Hannah's sayings and doings. He went further; he dramatised many of the situations with agonising sensitivity. The ménage at 6 Fig Tree Court was like an invention in the *Bab Ballads*; but it happened to be true, and it held as much pathos as comedy.

Each day increased Munby's sentimental fondness for his wife. On 8 May, a caller actually lifted his hat to her, while she was wearing her black silk dress, and said to someone: 'I didn't see the servant, I saw a tall fine looking *lady*!' 'Now that I've been taken for a *lady*, I couldn't possibly clean your boots!' Hannah pointed out.

The next day was Munby's turn to be witty. 'If you please Sir, the kitchen & cellar have got so dirty with the workmen's boots, I must have a charwoman to clean them!' said Hannah. 'Then get *Hannah*; she's the very best charwoman I know,' replied Munby, who added: 'These little comedies delight me, for they bring out my darling's graceful archness, and show that she is happy. "I get happier every day, Massa," said she the other night' (9 May). And now that the weather was warmer, she was more willing to go out of town at week-ends.

Sunday, 11 May: Southend . . . The chambermaid at the Ship Hotel is a gentle and comely young woman, with delicate features and superior ways: and the sanction of a married bed did not lessen her pretty bashfulness, when she brought in the hot water, and brought in the bath and the can, and arranged them; and answered a few questions, modestly keeping her eyes on the ground. When she had gone, 'I think she is not used to it,' said my lady Hannah, 'she seems so confused. *I* used to have to light the fires, even in the gentlemen's rooms, while they were in bed, when I was under housemaid; I used to walk straight in, and kneel down, and do the grate, and I thought nothing of it, though I was so young. That was because I was *ordered* to do it, and it was my *work*. But afterwards, when I had to wait at table, I felt so awkward and confused, and thought every one was looking at me. Still, now I'm older, I can wait at table very well, if you have any one to dinner.' So spake my lady, reposing at ease in her chamber . . .

Wednesday, 21 May . . . Dined about 6, and sat with Hannah till after 8; then dressed, and by rail to Notting Hill, to the last of the Wednesday parties at Aubrey House: the last, for ever. P. A. Taylor is going to sell this charming rus in urbe; ample widespreading old country house, with timbered lawns, and

acres of garden: all doomed, apparently.[3] The large rooms were filled with a crowd of people, famous or otherwise: blind Fawcett, holding forth in his corner, with a face that would be pathetic if he were not so selfasserting: hawk-like cynical James Stansfeld, gliding coldly about, demure and silent; MacCallum, fresh from the East; and many more. Half my acquaintance seemed to be there. I left at 11.30, & home by rail: and after kissing Hannah, went in, as I had promised, to an uproarious party given by my neighbour Capt. Batten! A room walled in with rifles and bayonets; trumpets & flags over the fire place, big drums hung from the ceiling: the Recorder of Cambridge singing comic songs; the Revising Barrister playing the tambourine; officers of the 8th Foot, and other youngsters, making enormous noise, with voice & piano and drums . . .

Thursday, 29 May. To the Club, where James[4] met me at 5.30, and we walked to Fleet Street and dined at The London. I had arranged with Hannah that she should spend the evening with her Clerkenwell friends, in order that I might have a tête à tête with James, and tell him our story—the rest of it. As she was busy watering and trimming her window plants this morning, all in her servant's dress, I said 'I shall say to Mr. James, This is our Hannah's garden.' 'Ah' said she 'then he will say, "I suppose they are as rustic looking as she is"!' 'Tell her,' said James tonight, apropos of this, 'that when I saw that picture of her, I thought she was a duchess.' We came in from dinner at 7.30; found coffee ready, and everywhere the traces of a loving woman's thoughtful care: James lighted a cigar and took the easy chair, and by the twilight and the firelight I took up the story at the point where I left off when I sought his counsel in January 1872, and told him all: except the details of her past drudgery and humiliation as a charwoman, which to him might have seemed to mar the pure ideal of a rustic sweetheart. He listened intently, this wise friend of my youth, for nearly two hours: and said at last, 'You have done right, and you have given me enough to think of for a long time to come.' And then, while dressing, I told him of her ways: of her favourite saying, 'God made me for you!' and how she shook her head at the slaughter in Deuteronomy, and said 'That was not very nice of you, Mr. Moses!' At last, about ten, James drove with me to Chandos Street Cavendish Square; and we walked up & down there, still talking of Hannah, before we parted and I went in to Miss Warren's concert-party . . .

Whitsunday, 1 June . . . I found my darling, drest in her black silk 'frock' and a clean white apron, and without a cap, sitting in the armchair, finishing a long letter to her sister, Ellen the nurse. I asked leave to read it, and found that it was full of happiness, and praises of her husband: what a good husband she had got, and what a happy home. Sweet, loving soul, the praise is hers. She is indeed the wife of a man much above her in rank & education; she lives with him as an

[3] Aubrey House miraculously survived two world wars and other dangers.
[4] Henry James, of Cheltenham, had become a prosperous military coach.

equal and a beloved one, has no longer a mistress, but has her freedom, and h companionship, & culture at home with him, and is clothed and honoured as lady whenever he can take her abroad: but here, among the neighbours, she still only a servant; she still wears her kitchendress . . . and all who see her be lieve that she is her husband's hired servant and his drudge. For his sake, and for the sake of her own love and humility, she foregoes not only the name and place of a lady, which she thinks herself unfit for, but even her own due and cherished name of wife. What woman except Hannah would be capable of such lofty selfsacrifice? A lady-wife would scorn the menial work, the humble ma and behaviour, which is natural to Hannah: an ordinary servant would look marriage with a gentleman as the means of escape from toil, of obtaining fi clothes, of airing her new honours as a 'lady'.

I went down tonight to see Rees about some matter: and presently he beg talking about Hannah. 'Where is your servant now?' said he. 'She's upstai said I carelessly, 'packing my portmanteau: I'm going away tomorrow[5] for week.' And again: 'I'm glad you set your face against having Tarrant and wife, now,' said the Reviser; 'it's much better to have Hannah living in kitchen; and she seems so anxious to make things clean and respectable.' she's very willing, and an excellent servant,' says Hannah's master, gravely

Monday, 9 June . . . I went at 5 p.m. to Kensington, to one of Mrs Ashur afternoon levées; where was Mrs Stansfeld, Mlle Bovet, and a few oth walked back through Kensington Gardens and the Ride, escorting the Julie; who informed me that I was 'a most worldly man', and that my love common servant like Hannah was perfectly ridiculous.[6] Said she, 'I migh well fall in love with a man-cook!' forgetting that in Hannah's eyes, a man is (or was) a superior being . . .

Friday, 13 June . . . home to dinner at 6.30. A new surprise: our bedroom had been made fair, with white curtains, and green ribands, & new blinds put up today by our busy Hannah, who said smiling, when she was kissed 'It does not cost much to give a deal of pleasure!' Well, surely folks will that something more than a hired servant is here: nothing but Love could h turned these dusky purlieus into a sweet and sunny home.

Hannah did not sit down by me today as usual; for she was busy in the kitchen; she went up & downstairs, in her servant's dress, and answered the (which I rang at her request) and took care to be seen . . . by Mrs. N carrying trays up to the parlour; and then she cleared away, and descend again, because she would, and had her supper all alone in the kitchen; and she 'washed up' at the sink there, and sang; I heard her voice floating up the cellars; because she was happy? 'Yes!' said she: 'and I sang while cleaning the knives.' For she came up afterwards, and entered the room

[5] To Clifton Holme. [6] Julie Bovet did not know they were married.

the large lamp in both her hands: 'Now I'm the servant, carrying the lamp!' she said; with childlike vivacity and with pathetic truth. And she brought in a sheet of white muslin, bought to make blinds of, and sailed round the room, her tall figure wrapt in it as in a ball-dress, and her servile clothes all hid by it, and her sweet face glowing in the midst of fantastic white headdresses made of its folds. 'What would they say of me downstairs' says she 'if they was to see me *now*?'

Monday, 16 June . . . Home to dinner at seven, and sat quietly with my darling till after 9; she, in her Swiss cap, leaning back in the armchair and watching with frequent words of delight the beauty of our three parlour windows in the sunset: the plants and ferns, the white gauze curtains and green blinds, the linnet in its cage, the cat, with scarlet ribbon round its neck, sunning itself among the flowers on the central sill. All this is her work. . . .

Wednesday, 18 June . . . Saw the Shah of Persia[7] arrive at Charing Cross, at 6.30 p.m. Sitting upright in an open carriage, a diamond aigrette on his tall black cap, he seemed to take no notice of the crowd and the cheering. But the Persians of his suite were all animated and curious; they bowed, and salaamed, and looked eagerly up at a Persian inscription hung across the street. I was struck by the sameness of their faces; all regular, intelligent, and alike. The vast crowd of spectators was most orderly and goodhumoured, and cheered this unknown Asiatic with a simple and pathetic enthusiasm. . . .

During the next few weeks, Mr. and Mrs. Munby spent a night together at Shepperton, and also a long week-end in the Isle of Wight, which Hannah had never visited and liked very much. After their return, Mr. Thornbury, the tenant, asked Hannah where Mr. Munby had been. Hannah said she believed he had been to the Isle of Wight: '"Ah" says he "it's a beautiful place!" and I said "Yes, Sir, I've heard as it's very pretty."' (5 July).

Friday, 11 July. This morning at breakfast, Hannah by chance let fall a knife. 'There!' said she at once 'I shall see a strange man here today.' For she is ever full of picturesque rustic folklore; never omits to turn her tea cup three times round and study the dregs; and gives to every little domestic accident its proper symbolic meaning; having herself just that imaginative half-belief in such symbolism, which is so attractive, because it does not lessen your respect for her understanding.

When I came home to dinner at 6, Hannah, instead of being upstairs as usual, was in the kitchen. She ran up from the kitchen to meet me at the door, whisper-ing 'Massa, *Mr. Moore*[8] is upstairs! Hasn't it come true?' For she had never seen

[7] Nasiruddin (Nasr-ed-Din) Shah, the first shah of Persia to visit Europe.
[8] The Rev. F. J. Moore.

him before, and I had not expected him. 'Never you mind', she continued: 'the dinner is ready, and you just ring for me and take no notice of me, and I'll wait!' She was 'cleaned', and in her servant's evening dress; her longsleeved frock of green stuff, with white collar and brooch, her clean white apron & large white cap. Thus drest, she had opened the door to the strange man who, seeing a woman in servant garb, 'answering' the door and behaving to him with simple respect, had taken her position for granted and gone in without much looking at her. 'It's all right, he hardly noticed me!' said this sweet wife, so strangely wanting in love of admiration. I went up, and found the Vicar of Bottesford, just returned from his ramble in Belgium.

Making the best of the situation, I asked him to join me at dinner, and rang the bell. Instead of presenting our guest to my gentle graceful wife, and bidding him take the honour of a place by her at table, I had to treat her as one who served, and whom he would not care to notice. My wife came up from her kitchen to answer the bell; she entered the room in her kitchen dress, carrying a tray, looking demure & respectful; and the visitor never checked his talk nor looked at her. She set the dinner, waited silently on her husband and his friend, said 'Sir' when she was spoken to, which was but seldom; and only one of the two took any note of her graceful gliding ways and her noiseless neathanded and effective service. When dinner was over, and she had cleared away, she stood in the doorway and said 'Shall I make any coffee now, Sir?' 'If you please', said her husband: and she made it and brought it upstairs. And then, I made an excuse to the unobservant Vicar, and went down to the kitchen, full of sadness and self-reproach. She was there, standing at the sink, under the window, washing up our dinner things. And straightway, she left her work, and ran smiling and flung her wet arms around her husband, crying 'Well, Massa, what fun!' '*Fun!*' to see my wife waiting at table like a servant? 'Oh nonsense!' said this lively creature, who had seemed so demure in the parlour: 'You know it's quite natural to *me*; and I know how to wait: didn't I do it well?' 'Yes you did—but I felt as if I must tell you to sit down with us, and say "she is my wife".' 'It's a good job you didn't, then,' said our Hannah: 'the ideal you shanna let everybody know our secrets!' She brought a chair for her husband by the kitchen fire, and laid herself down on his breast, in the old delightful way; and thus they sat together for ten minutes or so, till she said 'You must go upstairs now, or you may have suspicion aroused.' 'Yes, and how long will he stay? To think that you are banished to the kitchen, and I dare not have my own wife to sit in her own parlour!' 'What of that?' said the wife, with one more kiss: 'it's warm and nice down here, and I've plenty of work; I want to wash and iron a bit, and I've several things to do for you. Besides, you can ring for me,' she added . . .

But he did not ring: after a time, she came upstairs of her own accord, and knocked humbly, and stood in the doorway and said 'If you please Sir, I should like to go out for the errands, before the shops shut.' 'Very well', said he, noticing (but his friend did not) that this time, she had on her old bonnet and her cloak.

At length, after 9 p.m., the goodnatured unobservant Vicar went away; and when he had gone, his hostess and servant came upstairs and resumed her rights. When she was waiting at table, she had heard his travel-talk & noticed his bad French; which now she criticized, lying back in the armchair, and amusing herself in the twilight by repeating in French and in German the numerals, the names of the months and days, and other words, which she had picked up years ago from her master the French cook and her German fellowservant.

Ten o'clock came and passed; and I wished my darling goodnight, & went to the Theodore Martins'. There I found grand music, and a gorgeous assemblage; men wearing stars and orders; a Bishop in purple coat and silver buckles; Sir Frederic Pollock, Sir Rutherford Alcock, Sir Arthur Helps with his bristling white hair and 'peart' white face, so like Mazzini, only not grave and sad, as *his* face was. I took Sir Arthur's daughter down to supper; a plain and quiet girl. No woman there had a face or figure to match my kitchen maid's: but one, Mrs W. H. Brookfield, reminded me of her—for she wore a mobcap.

I walked home by 2 a.m.

On 15 July, after leaving his office at 4.30, Munby 'wasted nigh three hours in making calls', in Regent's Park and Hampstead: 'All were out.' His invisible marriage allowed him to continue, at the age of 45, to play the rôle of an accomplished bachelor. Presumably he enjoyed it; he was always spurred on by curiosity, his restlessness being especially evident during the summer months in London. Having spent another week-end at Ockley with Hannah (19–21 July), he travelled all the way back to Gomshall by himself, two days later, to see the spot where the Bishop of Winchester (formerly of Oxford), Samuel Wilberforce, had just been killed in a fall from his horse. His view of this capable but contentious prelate had mellowed considerably since 1860, when he had thought his appearance 'not prepossessing'.

Wednesday, 23 July. At 4.25 p.m. I went by train from Charing Cross to Dorking & Gomshall . . . Hannah laughingly refused to come. . . . From Gomshall station I walked back along the road through Abinger Hammer, and past the Hall, and up a deep shady lane to a lofty bit of common, rough with gorse. This is Evershed's Rough: and on the further and lower side of it, in a lovely spot opposite a thatched barn and sheepfold, I found the cross in the turf, and the smooth and trivial hollow where the Bishop fell.[9] Some 3 weeks ago, I was in the room with him, taking part in a discussion: I noted his dress and manner, his quaint cloak & staff, his episcopal ring on the forefinger, and above all, the charm of his talk and the mobile sweetness of his expressive manywrinkled face. One moment, and presto! this master spirit is—where? . . .

[9] The place is now marked by a granite cross.

Friday, 25 July . . . home to dinner by seven. 'Ring for me when you're ready, Massa' said my darling, who was at work downstairs: and she came up and sat by me in the easy chair, and picked currants for her future jellies, and talked in her sweet bright way. And then she went down and had her supper in the kitchen, as she loves; and came up again and arranged the window plants, and read to me, finishing Mrs Godolphin.[1] Last night, she insisted on sleeping alone, in the servant's bed in the kitchen, to air it. Tonight, when she had returned to me & I went my rounds, I found my sweet wife's scouring apron hanging to the kitchen fire to dry. . . . 'Tis a coarse brown woollen apron, striped with red and yellow . . . which I gave her years ago. . . . To strangers, a degrading and repulsive garment; to me, attractive and noble & sacred. . . .

In the midst of this strange but idyllic existence, comes a reminder of the underlying strain it entailed, and a portent for the future. On 5 August Munby returned home at 6.30 'and found my darling Hannah strangely hysterical and unwell, so that I spent the evening in nursing her and putting her to bed. Among other burdens, this of a possible illness is ever upon me.'

The next day Hannah had recovered, and on 7 August Munby took her out of town—the weather was extremely hot—to stay the night at the Burford Bridge Hotel, near Dorking. Having cleaned the stairs at Fig Tree Court 'in her dirt' only a few hours before, she was to be seen 'in a drawingroom of the hotel, reading the Midsummer Night's Dream!' (an appropriate choice). Munby adds: 'Those clouds of dirt and affected coarseness are very necessary, if the light is to be hid.' Perhaps—but this was not Munby's original motive in preaching lowliness to Hannah; and it was now difficult for Hannah, having religiously demeaned herself for twenty years, to know whether she was supposed to be still a 'rude mechanical' or a bettermost lady of Titania's court.

Munby could no longer easily decide whether he wanted Hannah's hands to be rough and cracked, or smooth and soft. It was almost impossible to have it both ways, before the days of detergents and cheap hand-lotion. Determined to sponsor his wife as an intermittent lady, he busied himself in buying gloves for her, and a parasol—'I always forget that I've got it!' Hannah said (1 August)—and even a fan, which she greeted with alarm but suffered to dangle from her wrist.

Munby tried to make Fig Tree Court into a real home for his wife, and daringly allowed Hannah to invite her shopgirl sister, Polly, to stay with them in his spare-room for a week, 'trusting that Hannah's admirable

[1] John Evelyn's Life, published in 1847. The diarist was a man after Munby's heart, and the nearness of Evelyn's Wotton had helped to attract him to the Ockley neighbourhood.

sense and readiness of wit may manage as cleverly for Polly's peace & reputation as for her own they do' (9 August). It was an improving visit, which shocked no one. Munby took the sisters to the South Kensington Museum; they went by themselves to see Doré's pictures in Bond Street.

Thursday, 14 August . . . home to dinner with Hannah. Sister Polly was gone to see Sister Ellen[2] . . . but Hannah had stayed at home and 'had the sweep'; whereby she had become almost as black as he was, a-working with and after him. . . . Sister Polly came before ten; and sat with her bright complex hair and her elegant grey dress, by the table, trimming Hannah's Sunday gown, while Hannah, still in her servant's cap & apron & frock, and bare armed, read Heber's[3] Palestine aloud. Superior welldrest Mary had never heard of Heber or his poem. And afterwards, at Hannah's desire, I played and sang to the piano awhile, and they two, poor untaught Graces of the piano playing sex, sat by and listened, knowing no note of music, pathetically wishing that they did.

Saturday, 16 August. This morning at Whitehall, a messenger came to my room with a telegram . . . & a note; & said that someone was waiting in the hall. I went down; and whom should I find among the messengers in the hall, but my own beloved wife! She was seated on the footmen's bench by the door, where humble folk wait; she was drest as a servant, in her lilac cotton frock and clean coarse apron; her old strawbonnet on, and her bare hands and arms visible beneath her old grey cloak. As I approached, she rose, looking demure and humble, as she used to do when she sat thus in gentlefolks' halls waiting to guard her mistress; she rose and stood before me, and made a rustic curtsy to her husband. He, longing to kiss her, said a few hurried words, as it were a message; and with another curtsy, she withdrew, saying 'Very well, Sir.'

When I got home, about 4 p.m., there she was, in the same dress, her sweet rosy face and arms new-washed, a-combing out her soft brown hair. 'Did you notice my curtsying to you, Massa?' she said, as soon as he let her speak. And she added, 'You saw what a figure I looked, just a rough servant? Well, would you believe it, a smart well-drest young man followed me ever so far as I came back, and at last he said "Oh you naughty girl!" and "Would you like a glass of ale?" But I turned round, and said to him "I beg your pardon, what did you say?" and when he saw my look, he went away.' . . .

Sunday, 17 August. Brilliant day. This morning, after Hannah had 'done' the rooms, and when we were talking over our journey[4] and preparing for a late breakfast, I suggested that for certain reasons we should prudently ask neighbour Rees, the Revising Barrister, to breakfast. Hannah eagerly agreed; &

[2] The nurse at Putney.
[3] Reginald Heber (1783–1826), the hymn-writer; later Bishop of Calcutta.
[4] They were going to France together for ten days.

straightway went down, in cap & apron & bare armed, as she was, and gave a single knock at our neighbour's door. 'If you please, Sir,' I heard her say, 'my master sends his compliments, and would you breakfast with him?' Neighbour Rees comes up; and, to the casual eye, the loving and vivacious wife sinks at once into a mere servant. 'Hannah, are you there? take away, please.' 'Yes, Sir,' says his wife, coming out of a back room with her tray; and she clears away the breakfast things, a neat and silent waitingmaid, while neighbour Rees continues his talk & his pipe, with his back to her, and never rises nor regards her. Hard; yet sweet and noble, and done with a just purpose . . .

. . . The note she brought with the telegram yesterday was . . . to prepare me for seeing her. 'Dearest' it said 'I shall bring this myself, so as you may have it at once; and I shall come as a servant, but I shanna say *whose* servant I am.' As I write, she is trying on her new pair of kid gloves; *not* old ones of mine, but 'bought o' purpose', for once. They are 8's—the largest women's size . . .

Monday, 18 August. This morning at 9, Hannah, in her working dress, went out to fetch Roberts the foreman, apropos of whitewashing. 'Where is your master going?' says Roberts, as he and she walk back together. 'Oh' says Hannah carelessly 'he's going to France or somewhere, I believe': and she opens the door and says 'Mr. Roberts, Sir!' to her husband, and then retires. Presently she is called in: What time do you think you can be ready for the men, Hannah? 'About the 2nd or 3rd of September, Sir,' says she; and then, standing there in her cap & apron and shortsleeved frock, she speaks to Roberts, as a mature and trusted servant might speak, about the work.

After I was gone, she had a talk downstairs with 'the other laundress'—the blooming widow; who asked her (and she readily agreed) to clean Mr. Rees's room tomorrow. The blooming widow has a sweetheart: 'and what a pity' she says to my Hannah 'that a fine looking young woman like *you* doesn't never think of getting married!' 'Oh' replies the wife, speaking à la mode du pays, 'I never *did* think nothing o' them things, in my life!' . . . After dinner, Hannah tried on, in all sorts of charming surprises, the rustic felt hat I had bought for her tour; and sat down to the piano, still in her servant's dress, and puzzled out Home sweet Home; and went to and fro, singing scraps of hymns, in a low and tender voice.

Early the next morning, 19 August, Munby lay at ease in bed, listening first to Hannah cleaning the grate next door, and then to the distant crunch of coal being dug out of the cellar. 'Ah, what a wife—what rough robust energy in labours like these, what grace and unspeakable tenderness in all else!' he ruminated, until his conscience suddenly pricked him: 'Why not get up and help her?' But this alarm was soon over. 'Wait till to-morrow, when (please God) she has ceased for a while to be a servant, and is leaning on her husband's arm, making her first acquaintance with a

foreign land; wearing this graceful hooded cloak which I buy for her today, and this ravissant hat of black felt, trimmed by herself with feather and with veil.' One visualises a period drawing by Cattermole, with Munby as the attendant cavalier.

At 10.30 on the morning of Wednesday, 20 August, Munby drove away in a cab with a portmanteau, saying firmly 'Goodbye Hannah'; and Hannah let it be widely known that she had been given ten days' holiday. At 4.30 in the afternoon 'a tall and elegant lady in travelling dress' met Munby at the Charing Cross station, and 'we walked together to the tidal train, in which I had already arranged her seat and her luggage: the very portmanteau which my servant Hannah carried to my cab this morning.'

Munby wrote a special account of their adventures abroad in a separate notebook. Filled with praise for Hannah's graceful performance, it includes a sentence reflecting the confusion in which he found himself on the lady-and-servant question: 'her hands are getting better—or worse—with leisure . . .'

There were heavy seas in the Channel that August. Munby and Hannah were obliged to spend the night at Folkestone, and did not land at Boulogne until the 21st. They then went, among other places, to Rouen, Honfleur, Lisieux, Caen, Falaise, Trouville and Étretat. Hannah noticed everything, appreciated the churches, and was quick to make comparisons with English scenery and people. Munby bought her several presents, including a servant's cap for 2 fr. 50 and a vitré shawl for the equivalent of five shillings (thus once more backing it both ways). Admiring her elegance at Trouville on 27 August, he wrote: 'It takes both these phases of circumstance, to bring out all the various beauty and force that is in her: and if I regret the kitchen half of her existence, it is not because I undervalue its charms.'

At Étretat, on the 28th, Hannah 'danced about the room like a girl, imitating the sprightly air and actions of French chambermaids. "You will find me a very noisy servant when we get home, Massa," says she; "I shall be running about and crying 'Oh oui Monsieur!' and 'tout de suite' all day long!"'

She was generally content to be idle, but at Caen 'she surreptitiously made our bed, to save the femme de chambre trouble'. Munby is at pains to stress that they occupied a double-bed; he noted a French preference for sleeping apart, and found that nearly all the chambermaids assumed they wanted two beds.

They had another unpleasant crossing on the return journey, by night, from Boulogne to Folkestone in the *Princess Clementine*, a second-class

cargo boat. Munby was put into the men's cabin; Hannah into the ladies'. After the train journey, the usual parting followed; 'Cinderella had returned from the ball', wrote Munby. Her showing as a lady had pleased him. 'And, whatever the reason, she was free too from those strange moods of depression and "naughtiness" which affect her sometimes at home, and which perplex and sadden me so because she will not give me the clue to them nor let me comfort her . . . I have loved her for twenty years as a servant; and this year, now that I am her husband, I learn to love her as a lady too.'

Saturday, 30 August . . . Arrived at Folkestone from Boulogne, 5 a.m., and at Charing Cross, 9.46. Hannah returns to the Temple—I home in the afternoon, and find her metamorphosed from an elegant lady into a rough maidservant. With her till 5 p.m., then to King's Cross and by train to Yorkshire. Reach Clifton Holme before eleven: find my dear parents well, and Carry and Edward with them.

This return to York for his family holiday sounds precipitate. One wonders how much, if anything, Munby told his parents about the trip to Normandy; he salved his conscience by setting out immediately with his father for a tour of the Lake District. Hannah, left alone, embarked on the most rewarding of her spasmodic diaries. Reading aloud to Munby had strengthened her vocabulary.

Hannah's Diary: Saturday, 30 August, 1873 . . . I am just return'd home after ten days tour in France with my darling Massa & husband—We started from Boulogne at two o'clock this morning after lying in our berths nearly an hour. I kept well *to* Boulogne, & it was my first sea voyage too, except crossing the Solent for the Isle o' Wight with M. this year, & *this* Journey was rough, but I kept well a long time—*going up & down* with the waves in imagination & not opening my eyes, but I could hear all going on, & that my husband was very bad—i ask'd after him several times from the steward & sent messages—at last I was a little bit ill . . . and I went to sleep, for when I woke I was so pleas'd to see it was daylight & I felt better, & my first thought was to go & see Massa, so I jumped out . . . & run along the floor, tottering a little, & I found M. still sick & hoarse with retching—I wiped his face, & said i thought we were in harbour—he call'd me his child, & said how ill he'd bin & told me to go & lie down again, & so i was glad to do, for I felt sleepy & knock'd up, but soon after the man said we must land, & i got up again & fasten'd my clothes & pick'd my things up to go ashore—Massa came for me, & when we landed it was a fine calm Morning. . . . This ten days has been quite new to me of course, crossing from Folkstone to Boulogne—from Boulogne to Rouen—there we saw the ancient buildings

statue of Jean d'Arc—and the beautiful churches. And at the Hotel d Albion where we stopp'd was a most amusing little maid—bowing & scraping in the most lively Attitude, & most civil to Monsieur & Madame—When i left she help'd me on with my cloak & as well as i could [i] said 'Nous revenez' & then 'How funny that you & i cannot understand one another' me meaning both being servants—but she only laugh'd & said 'Oui Madame'. We had a long sail from Rouen to Honfleur in the boat, but a very pleasant one, along the River Seine, & most days we have had long journeys, by rail & road or water, & seen a great deal in the time . . . and everywhere i was treated most respectfully—just as if i was a real lady—And Massa says i behaved nicely & look'd like a lady too. He bought me a felt hat & plume of cocks feathers to wear, & a veil, & a new brooch to pin my shawl with, & a new waterproof cloak, but i generally wore my blue skirt & jacket over my grey frock, with frill round my neck, & white cuffs, & grey kid gloves, & carrying my striped sunshade—all so different to anything i had got used to, that one day in the train I got almost illtemper'd at being so muffled up, & i felt i'd much liefer feel my hands free as they used to be—but M. made me put the gloves on again, & i thought it was hard to be forced to wear gloves—even harder than it was to leave em off altogether before i was married, as i did for over 16 year i think. When i started, i wore my old black bonnet to Folkstone, & changed it there, & the same back again, & put my plaid shawl over my skirt so i wasn't noticed coming into the Temple nor going out. . . . And here i am again—very glad to get back, & i've doff'd all my best clothes & put my own on again—my dirty cotton frock & apron & my cap—taken the top dust off the things & lighted the fire—fetch'd in some bread & butter, & got my dinner—then i rested till M. came in, & we unpack'd our bags & things & then pack'd the large portmanteau for M. to start home with—he was gone by ½ past 5 after wishing me a hearty good bye & hoping i should not be dull—i said i shouldn't & didn't mean to be, but i think it's not possible to be any other—quite alone in this very quiet place, & not a soul to speak to confidentially—for I'm obliged to look at my words lest i sh[d] say anything to Mrs Newton or anyone to betray myself. . . .

Sunday, 31 August . . . Mr Rees came in between ten & eleven—he saw the black door was open & came up stairs—i went to the door—he said 'You're come back Hannah' i said 'Yes sir'—so he told me how he was sleeping away at his Mother's for the present, & that i may keep the outer door shut as much as i liked. & then he went down again saying 'good morning' & i said 'good morning sir', and i saw no one else here the rest o' the day . . .

Monday, 1 September. First thing i went to the Surveyors Office . . . after i'd said goodmorning sir, & if there was any answer to Mr. Munby's letter from the surveyor about the work—The foreman said he didn't think there was any need of an answer if Roberts had promised to see about it . . . so i wrote & told M.

what i knew & also how i miss'd the politeness i'd bin used to in France—the englishmen seem almost *rude* in their bluntness, & certainly civility & politeness is much the pleasantest—only i think everyone knows that the English don't *mean* to be rude, & it wouldn't be right to say the French only put on or *learn* their civility & do not really mean it. . . .

Friday, 5 September. I was up & dress'd by six o'clock this morning to let the men in . . . i took the bedroom carpets, door mats & rugs, & the paper from under the big carpet to sweep in the court—i soon got dirty of course arms & face & all & i could feel the dust on my neck—Nothing new to me cause i've done the same thing so often before, but in the Temple i'm sure a working woman is look'd on as been particularly low—first cause they are nearly all very poor & drudging like, & being among so many single gentlemen hardly a respectable young woman would be expected to live here, but i *have* seen a many younger looking than me in the Temple. . . .

Wednesday, 10 September . . . One o' these men come down to me in the kitchen yesterday & ask'd me very abruptly if the master had left any beer money for them—i said 'No not especially—only i know he's not a bad one for that sort o' thing, and no doubt he'll leave it to me to give as i think proper.' He said 'Well I hope you wont forget us' i said 'Why you've scarce begun work yet' & he went up stairs again, & i thought 'i shall see you more civil before i give you anything.' And i was at work with them most o' the day today—answering 'em civilly but dignified, & towards the evening they both was quite civil to me, & the one as didn't ask for the money i give a shilling to, to share, & he touch'd his hair & said 'Thank you Mum' . . .

Thursday, 11 September . . . this morning just before twelve when i was splash'd with dirt & was scouring near the door of M's room another working man was up there & as i was on my knees he tapp'd me on the shoulder & said 'i *should* like to come & have tea with you o' Sunday'—i said 'i'm seldom in Sundays'—he said 'Well you're not engaged, are you? Could i go out with?' i said i'm much obliged to you all the same but i want no company . . . i like to be free with all the workmen & civil of course, but some how i hate them to pretend making love to me—it annoys me, & then i can look so straight & tho' i look such a drudge & am ten times blacker than they are i feel as if they've no *right* to speak to me on that subject.

On the same day that Hannah fended off the attentions of the workman, her husband, released from attendance on 'the father', was enjoying himself at Wigan, his traditional hunting-ground.

Thursday, 11 September: Wigan. At 5.30 a.m. I was awoke by the tramp of the factory girls. My window at the Royal Hotel looks upon the market place. I got up, and saw the broad street busy with women and girls, all in clogshoon

and most of them with shawls over their heads, all tramping to work in groups of two & three, and talking broad Lancashire audibly. Hundreds of them; and hardly any men. The sun had not risen; it was dawn, and great rosy clouds were in the west. I went to bed again; . . . About ten, I went through the market place, and down Clarence Yard to the humble abode of Mrs Little, photographer, & cab-owner's wife. I enquired for Ellen Grounds. 'Hes yon wench coom?' 'Yea, hoo hes,' said Mrs Little; and she and her grown up daughter wore a puzzled smile, as if they were about to show me some strange creature. A moment afterwards, Ellen herself came out of the kitchen; and she was in her pit clothes, as she had promised. 'Well, Ellen, yo've cooml' 'Yah, Ah's coom, Sirl' said the collier-lass, who looked vastly better, and also bigger, in her working dress, than she did last night in woman's clothes. She wore her wadded bonnet, the front part tied tight over the forehead, and the hood encircling her head like an aureole; her loose bluepatched cotton bedgown made her full bust and broad shoulders look larger still; below it, came her striped skirt, gathered up round the hips; and under that, her breeches—the pair she showed me last night—and her ironshod clogshoon. She had forgotten to bring her top coat; and first she tried on a coat belonging to Mrs Little's son, a big lad; but it was too small for her; so she tried a rough coat, like her own, of *Mr.* Little's; and it fitted her well. Then she was furnished with a spade, to represent her great pit shovel. She shouldered the spade in workmanlike fashion, buttoned her coat, and stood readily and well, as I posed her; and she was taken, first in that guise, and then without the coat; I standing beside her, to show how nearly she approached me in size.[5] Indeed, the bigness of this bonny Ellen struck me more than ever: she seemed to fill the lobby and the portrait shed with her presence; she was as big as Mrs Little & her daughter together; . . . and she strode about the room in her sounding clogs, and laughed and chatted with the two women in a kindly and respectful way, but with the air of a strong man speaking to feeble folk. . . . She did everything just as she was told; and enlivened the proceedings by jests at her own expense, and hearty goodhumoured talk . . .

The next day Munby, in his rôle of inspector, undertook an extensive tour in search of local colliery-women; but, half-way through, he found himself suddenly home-sick for Hannah. He sent her a telegram, and impulsively hurried back to Fig Tree Court, interrupting his holiday.

Saturday, 13 September. I awoke from sleeping, for the first time in my life, in a servant's bedroom in a kitchen—a cellar. In the low dark room was nothing but the bed, with a patched quilt on it made by Hannah out of her long series of cotton frocks, and two servant's boxes, and an old chair, and an old washhand-stand without basin or ewer. For my lowly wife retains her old habits; she has no looking-glass, no jug or basin; she washes herself at the sink, and has not seen

[5] See Plate 14, also Plates 12 and 13.

her own face for days; except yesterday, when she looked at herself upstairs, and found that 'I had a black streak across my nose, and my whole face was more or less dusty.' And with that face, and with hands and arms blacker still, she had just been out, in her coarse working clothes, and had her dinner for sixpence along with labouring men, at a cookshop in Fetter Lane. And this is she who, only a fortnight ago, was taking her meals with me, as a lady, in a fashionable hotel at Trouville. What other woman would be capable of such sublime impartiality?

I too washed at the sink, perforce; but my darling, who was shocked (forsooth) that I should have to come down to her level in this, had provided me a basin and hot water, and my own bath. She took care, too, that I should see her clean my boots; and she set out a parlour breakfast on the kitchen table, opposite to a bright fire and a cleanly hearth. As usual, she would not sit down with me to eat, but sat & read a chapter; drest now in her own dress as an English servant, and looking charming in her large cap & lilac frock, and bare arms, and clean 'harden' apron; with a background of shelves, neatly ranged with dishes of her own washing, and a strip or two of matting on the new boarden floor, fresh scoured by herself. 'My darling, how sweet this is, to be sitting thus in my own kitchen, with you! Do you know that you are my own wife, and that we never can be parted now, for ever?' And before the words are done, she is out of her chair and down on her knees before him, and her head is on his breast and her bare working arms are round him.

But there is not much time for petting: the workmen with whom she has wrought upstairs are gone, and now she has to 'clean after' them, and to scour the floors again. We go upstairs and above ground, to the parlour, now all in confusion; she in her hoodbonnet and striped scouring apron, and her dirty cotton frock. Whilst her skin is yet clean, she kisses him, and lifts him up with her arms into the air, to show her old strength; and she kneels down with her pail, and scrubs the floor, and soon her face and arms are as black as a collier girl's, or blacker. 'Fancy any *lady* coming down to have to do *this* work!' she says: yet between her scrubbing she talks well & brightly; quoting Shakespeare aptly, asking me questions out of Enfield's History of Philosophy, which she has been reading.

And so at 4 p.m. we kissed again & parted; and I to Yorkshire, and reached Clifton Holme by eleven.

Hannah's Diary: Sunday, 14 September. Altho' Massa has bin & gone away again so sudden i've not felt dull to day, nor last night either—Mr Rees (the gentleman on the ground floor) coming in while M. was saying good bye. & Massa of course not wanting to be seen especially in the kitchen, it started both of us, & M. was off to get dinner before going to King's Cross, & i up Fetter Lane in the rain to get my errands in, & so when i come back to my tea in the kitchen i was at home again, & all was again as afore M. came, only i felt *happier*

—how could i help it, after having such a proof of his love—to come from impulse 2 hundred miles just to see me—after i had written to him what i didn't think was anything especially nice, but *he* liked it, & in the afternoon couldn't help starting from Wigan, to me, instead of going to his other home—all for *love*, and i was as much pleas'd as i was surprised when i got the telegram soon after six to say he would be here from ten to 11. i'd begun to feel very tired, but all that was gone, & i made haste & made his bedroom quite ready & air'd things—went out afore i wash'd me for things for his tea, & then i clean'd the kitchen round on my hands & knees & made a nice bright fire & teathings laid & all, for my dear Lord & Master—and it seem'd so much nicer & more homely & cozy somehow, getting the *kitchen* ready for *him*—Should i have felt *such* pleasure for a common working man—i *might* if i had found a working man as could love as purely & be as Massa is (i mean in everything but his learning) & honour him as much, but that's the difficulty i doubt, the finding such a one—and so when i was young & did meet with Massa (whose face i'd seen in the fire)[6] i made my mind up that it was best & safest to be a slave to a *gentleman*, nor wife & equal to any vulgar man—still with the wish & determination to be independent by working in service and without the slightest hope o' been rais'd in rank either in place or by being married—And so at last—After all these nearly twenty years, by Gods help & Massa's true heart & fervent love to me, (more than ever i could dare to hope for from anyone but him, & i always trusted Massa) i am as i am—a servant still, & a very low one, in the eyes o' the world—i can work at ease—i can go out & come in when i please, & i can look as degraded as ever i like without caring how much i'm despised, in the Temple, or in Fetter Lane, or in the streets—and with all that i have the inward comfort o' knowing that i am loved & honoured & admired by, & that i am united in heart & soul as well as married at Church to the truest, best, & handsomest man in my eyes that ever was born—No man i ever see, or ever saw, is so lovely. And M. is pleas'd with me, & after all this there can be no doubt of our being made for each other—And so May God bless us together, & give us both wisdom to live happily always, & health & strength to do the work afore us, & grace that we may never forget who is the giver of all our comforts, & to praise Him more & more.

But Massa would not sleep in his own room, but down stairs in the kitchen bedroom with me—& we talk'd together till two o'clock. And in the morning he noticed how rough my knees are—they feel like a nutmeg grater, so different to his, & M. was so pleas'd to feel 'em, cause he said 'it was such a true sign of being a servant.'

I went to S. James' Church[7] this evening & enjoy'd the service very much—such nice quiet singing—and i saw the clergyman who married us, & thought he took'd at me.

Munby's Diary: Monday, 15 September: York . . . To York to meet Mrs Ellis and her two daughters, who came from Whitby, elegant, sprightly, and with

[6] See pp. 14–15. [7] Clerkenwell.

heaps of luggage. They came to Clifton to luncheon, and we to the train with them again at 3.40. As I handed Georgie Ellis, with her lemon kid gloves and costly sealskin jacket and infinite apparatus of ladyhood, into a first class carriage, I thought of that contrasted but far more beautiful She, who has become my wife instead of this one, who (they say) might have been my wife. Does this one, then, understand and realize a twenty years' passion like my sweet blackfaced Hannah, whose knees (as I found on Friday) are, even yet, rough and hard with years of scouring? . . .

Monday, 22 September . . . Reached the Temple before 4 a.m., and found my dear wife in the back room[8]: for, servantlike, after sleeping in the kitchen during my absence, she has gone the round of the beds, to air them. When I awoke at 9.30 or so, she had long been up and had got all ready: and how charming she looked, with her face full of love and smiles. She looks not at all like a lady, now: her bright face is rosy and full of health, thank God, after her three weeks' work. . . . The furniture is polished and shining; the pictures and their frames are lustrous and clear; the books and their many shelves have been dusted, and arranged with intelligent care; the curtains, white or crimson, hang crisp and newly washed. . . . But no mere housemaid she, though many take her even for a maid of all work still. And this has its inconveniences, now that surveyors & workmen are about the house. These are for ever paying attentions to 'the servant', to 'Mr. Munby's Hannah'. . . . One man . . . exclaimed 'You do more work than a dozen of *the other Temple women* put together!' Two others have asked permission to 'keep company' with her: and to one, a carpenter, she with her kitchen simplicity of manners gave leave to measure the girth of her right arm. It was (as it was ten years ago) 13½ inches round the muscle: and the man's admiration was great; 'upon my word' said he 'you've a bigger muscle than any woman I ever saw in my life—and bigger than my own!' . . . The same, after remarking to Hannah that her master seemed a nice gentleman, enquired if she thought I had ever been married? 'What a question to ask *me*!' said my ready-witted wife. Even Mr. Roberts the foreman, whom she addresses respectfully as 'Sir', is attracted by her, surly and elderly as he is: 'Now, Mr. Roberts', cried she one day, looking down on the gruff little man from her goodhumoured height, and showing her arm, 'you know I could screw you up in less than no time!' And next day, somehow, Mr. Roberts came down to her kitchen, and sat half an hour talking of his wealth. Another day this week, coming home at 5 p.m., I luckily went upstairs instead of down, and called 'Hannah!' over the banisters. '*Yes Sir!*' answered my wife from below, to my surprise: and running up in her working dress, she laughingly explained that 'her sweetheart' was in the kitchen,

[8] *Hannah's Diary*: '. . . put tea ready for M. after lighting the fire—left his shoes & night shirt airing—i wash'd all over & went to bed intending to get up to see after the fire, but i never woke till i heard M. open the bottom door & come up stairs. The Man brought the luggage up, & when he was gone Massa came to me in the back room & i welcomed him in my way tho' i was very sleepy, & he said he was pleas'd to get back to his own drudge Hannah.'

shelling beans for her. 'Which will never do,' said her husband; 'it is not fair to him': and her good sense agreed at once. . . . Every day this week (Monday to Thursday; 22 to 25 September) 'the master' has come in early, and dined at home, and enjoyed the loving companionship of his wife, who has read to him parts of The Earthly Paradise, and of The Village on the Cliff, whose scenes are laid in the places she has just been visiting with him. But never have I been able to persuade her to dine (or rather sup) with me. 'No' she says every day 'I had much rather have it in the kitchen, after you!' and malgré moi, she carries each course downstairs and finishes it in her kitchen, saying as she leaves the parlour 'You'll *ring for me* when you're done!'

Thursday, 2 October . . . meeting Rees at the door, whom I had not seen for long, I thought it well to ask him upstairs. He came, and sat some time; I wondering when he would go, and thinking of Hannah in the kitchen. At last he said 'I wish you would ask your servant about that 1/6 I owe you'—'Very well, I said, I will ring for her.' Ring for my wife, and in a strange man's presence! There came a tap at the door; the door opened and Hannah, in cap and apron, entered, and said 'Yes, Sir?' 'Oh', said Rees, 'do you remember whether I paid that 1/6?' 'No Sir' she answered demurely 'I give you the parcel, but you didn't pay me.' 'Very well—thank you'—and the gentle wife retires, backward: for, says she, 'I have always been used to go out of a room backward, before gentle folks!'[9] She had not come from the kitchen, but from the back room, to which she had retired when she heard her husband & his acquaintance approaching. When Rees had gone, she came in and had tea beside me, and I made it up to her for that humiliation. But she did not feel humiliated; she only laughed, and said 'If all that was wrote in a play and acted, folks'd say it couldn't be true!' No doubt: but to me it is rather tragedy than comedy. . . .

Saturday, 4 October . . . Today I meant to take Hannah to spend Sunday at Medmenham. But it was dull and threatening, so we did not go; and, I came home, and stayed with her all the afternoon & evening. I watched her . . . first sewing blankets, then ironing linen at the table; and thought, as she bent to and fro and moved her bare shapely arms to the work, that ironing is an occupation more graceful even than harp-playing, though the one is all curves & the other all angles.

A mild revival of stage-coaching now gave Munby the excuse he always sought for getting out of town whenever possible. On Monday, 6 October, he rode down to Leatherhead, where he stayed the night at the Swan. 'The fourhorse coach left the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly at 3.15—guard blowing his horn, every one turning round to look at us. The

[9] *Hannah's Diary*: '. . . And so i back'd out o' the room to go down to the kitchen, my dear husband looking at me in a masterly way & saying "i shall ring again for you presently". . . .'

realities of one generation come to be the mere toys of the next: fancy all the traffic of London, by land, depending on these playthings!'

Having walked with him from Surbiton to Chessington on the Sunday, Hannah understandably refused the coaching jaunt; she made up for it by going to see Adelaide Ristori (1822–1906), the Italian tragic actress, three times in the course of the week. Munby escorted her to *Elisabetta Reina d'Inghilterra* on the Wednesday: 'The play is a sort of cento of Elizabeth's troubles: but Ristori's acting was so fine that even in Italian its power was deeply felt by my English country lass and by me' (8 October). The next day Hannah saw her in *Marie Antoinette*. By then Munby had travelled in a front seat of another coach to Rochester, whence he visited his ailing friend Cuyler Anderson at Gillingham—before spending Thursday night at the Sun in Chatham.

Such restlessness may have been an early example of the commuter instinct, but it does indicate a large tolerance at the Ecclesiastical Commission. Munby was, however, trusted and valued there—and during his outings he would often transact a little official business: an interview with a parson, perhaps, or the inspection of a church.

Monday, 13 October. My old friend Vernon Lushington Q.C. and his wife have been living all the summer in that little house, Wheeler's Farm,[1] at Pyrford, and have more than once asked me to go there. They asked me to go today; and after talking it over with Hannah, I resolved to go; and went at 2 p.m. to Woking. From the station I walked, the old sacred way: past Oldlands Farm, along White Rose Lane, by Hoebridge Farm, and over Breakheart Field, and through Deadman's Copse in the dusk, and down the dark avenue to the village, and then straight into the churchyard first of all.

When you go back to a place where you have enjoyed the most exquisite imaginative delights and have gone through the keenest mental agony, how strange it seems that the lovely still life of the spot should show no traces of what has happened there. You bring such traces with you, and make the old haunts sad with them: but the old haunts themselves are very quiet and indifferent; you and your past are nothing now to them. Which is well; for it helps you to bear the change. I went first to old Mrs. Collier's charming cottage, and had some talk with her about the Carters; and then to *the* house. The green lane, the palings, the little garden, the whitegabled house, were just the same; but up to my bedroom window was a light, and a maid sat there sewing.

I went in; tall elegant Mrs. Lushington was in the house-place, now turned into a diningroom; and my room has become a handsome little drawingroom

[1] Munby had probably introduced Lushington to Wheeler's Farm, the scene of his innocent but devastating romance with Sarah Carter.

pictures & mirrors, Japanese fans & cabinets, tasteful costly trifles of all sorts, have wholly changed the two humble rooms in which those sweet romantic souls used to lead their lowly life: and this was well for me. . . . Vernon and I sat up till 1 a.m., talking of books, and of Comte. As of old, the moon was shining on the Abbey, and the water was tumbling at the weir.

Tuesday, 14 October. I came down at 7.30; for Vernon & his wife had to go through my room to get downstairs. It was a lovely brilliant autumn morning; V. and I left on foot at 8, and Mrs. L. came to the garden gate with us, just as sweet Sarah or her mother used to do. We walked over the heath, a lovely walk, and silent and quiet; and so to town at 9.

Very pleasant and friendly and nice; but the spiritual glow and freshness of Pyrford have gone for ever with those old days.

I went home at 4; but my dear wife, in her servant's dress, came forward demurely as I opened the door, and said aloud 'The carpenter is in the back-room, Sir!' However, we got rid of him . . .

Monday, 20 October . . . spent the evening quietly with Hannah . . . she wrote her diary: and told me how 'Mr. Thornbury', my acquaintance & tenant here, had actually noticed her in the street: 'he nodded to me, and I made him a little curtsy', says she. . . . And again, she tells me that one day he came into the room when she was dusting, and asked leave to write at my table. Says she, 'I said "Yes, Sir," and I was going away; but Mr. Thornbury said "Don't leave the room—I rather like to see you about"; so I went on dusting a bit, but I soon slipped out, for I felt awkward being there like that.' Awkward! a rare scene, truly: here is a mere stranger, who comes into my wife's parlour while she is there, sits down to write, and coolly desires her not to leave the room, for he rather likes to see her about! . . .

Friday, 24 October . . . Hannah had expressed a wish to see 'Arkwright's wife' at the Globe Theatre; because, as she said, it was a working woman's play: and I had said I should follow her, if she went. She was gone; and had left me a note in rhyme, signed 'Your own Servant and loving Wife': and had made all things ready for me, before going. I went into her room: there was her servant's cap, and the coarse apron she wears to work in, and her mother's sampler and her own framed on the wall, and the homely patchwork quilt of the little bed she creeps in when alone. No scented boudoir could be so dear to me. At the theatre, I found her in the gallery; for it never occurs to her to go anywhere else. Between two decent working men, there she sat, leaning forward, her bare hands clasped upon her large white apron: her milkwoman's bonnet, falling back, showing her brown rippling hair, and that noble expressive profile which has charmed me for twenty years. She was no languid or selfconscious listener; she was intent on the scene, her whole face was alive with emotion, and every now

and then, in rustic wise, she dashed away her tears with the back of her hand. I sat near, watching her unobserved; till she saw me with a start and a smile, and I made my way to her side, and sat with her hand in mine till the play was over. It is a poorish melodrama; but there were factory girls in it, and charity girls like Hannah, and a touch of Lancashire dialect; and Miss Helen Barry, who played the peasant wife, is a fine tall lass, and in her mob cap & kirtle looked not unlike my own wife.

We came home by ten; and after tea, Hannah finished reading to me The Village on the Cliff. Certainly she is very like Reine, in person and in character; and it is strange, that I used to talk (vaguely, of course) about Hannah, to Miss Thackeray, at the time when she was writing the story.

Sunday, 2 November . . . On Tuesday I weakly promised to take fair Charlotte Hill[2] to morning service at the Temple Church today; and did so accordingly, with no very good will, for the sight of those fashionable loungers crowding the historic church never fails to annoy me. And Charlotte, entering on my arm, was placed by the vergers in those very 'ladies' seats' from which my dear wife, who had gone there alone & in ignorance, was once turned out, because she was known to be only a servant. But she, this singular darling, took up with keen interest the visit of 'the young lady' to our home, though she knew—or indeed *because* she knew—that it would banish her to the kitchen, where she would have 'no fear of being seen'. She was not seen. Her handiwork, a neat little luncheon, was on the table when we came in; and all around were the signs of her taste and gentle skill in adornment: but she, the mistress of the place, could not appear before this chit of a girl, for whom her husband cared nothing. I went downstairs, and found my Hannah in her servant's dress, washing up at the sink. 'Well?' said she in high spirits, 'and how do you get on with the young lady? I shall get a sight of her from this kitchen, as you go out!' And so she did: this strange incomparable wife had to peep through the area-window at her husband's guest, whom she must not meet. It is too much: but 'No' she said afterwards 'I like getting luncheon for your friends in this way: right or wrong, *I like it*!' . . .

Two days later, the scene was more conventionally domestic. While Hannah sat reading aloud from *Clarissa* in the evening, there came an unexpected knock on the door of Munby's sitting-room. As usual, she got up and hid in the adjoining bedroom until her husband could identify the visitor. This time the caller was their confidant George Borland, who understood the whole situation and whom Hannah accepted as a friend. 'How do you do, Sir?' she said, emerging from the back room and making her curtsy; to which Borland responded by taking her hand 'with as much gallantry as if she were a lady born'. Hannah was then able to busy herself

[2] Daughter of 'Mrs. Hill of Ferrybridge', a Yorkshire acquaintance.

preparing tea, after which she sat sewing and listening. At eleven o'clock she retired. Munby and Borland 'sit up till one, talking, and chiefly of her. He wonders so that she likes to seem a servant still, and does not like to be a lady' (4 November).

But did either of these old bachelor cronies face the facts? For, if Hannah *had* insisted on becoming a lady-wife, Munby could not possibly have continued to live in the Temple during his parents' lifetime: the risk of the news reaching Clifton Holme would have been far too great. Hannah's reaction—at this period—was not only instinctive but also realistic.

Thursday, 6 November . . . I came home before ten, and found my darling already abed. I had stayed away in order that she might have some of her friends to visit her; cousin Elizabeth, the quiet lady's maid, Mistress Dunn, Hannah's old fellowservant, and Mary, a housemaid, whom Hannah describes as a sweet & patient girl with good working hands. For these three women she prepared cakes and tea; she showed them the pictures, the books, the flowers, the bird, the cat with a blue ribbon round its neck—all her own pretty arrangements of the ancient parlour; herself radiant in her black silk 'frock', and without her cap and apron. Four respectable female servants, enjoying themselves alone, in a barrister's chambers in the Temple; and one of them the barrister's wife. She showed them the kitchen, too, in which she does her rough work: but also she showed them photographs, read to them, and 'Here' she said at tea 'is a sonnet that my husband has just written to me'; and she read it to housemaid Mary and the rest, who thought it 'very pretty'. 'They all thought me looking so well,' says Hannah; 'and admired the house and everything; and Mrs. Dunn wondered that I could be so happy with—with *you*!'

Tuesday, 11 November . . . at 8, Hannah 'cleaned herself', and went with me in a hansom to the Quebec Institute in Seymour Street: for the papers announced that Mrs. Stirling would recite there certain poems, one of which was my Whaler Fleet.[3] It was the first time I have heard anything of mine read in public; and what I heard seemed to affect me precisely as if it had been written by somebody else. Mrs. S. read it with so much of dramatic action and style, that the rhythm of the verse was almost lost. The audience, which was numerous, applauded everything. As for Hannah, she knew her husband's verses, & enjoyed all she heard, and showed it freely. She cannot conceal her emotions, dear soul . . .

[3] See Appendix of Munby's poems. Mrs. Mary Ann (Fanny) Stirling, afterwards Lady Gregory (1815–95), played Cordelia to Macready's Lear, 1845, and Peg Woffington in *Masks and Faces*, 1852.

Wednesday, 19 November . . . After dinner, I sat looking over the work for my Latin class; Hannah sitting at my knee, with Freund's Dictionary on her lap. 'I wish *you* could come to my class,' said I: 'Oh, I could never learn to be a scholar!' she answered, sadly; 'but I do wish you to teach me *French*.' She looked out the words, however, for me . . .

Saturday, 22 November . . . to the Working Women's college, at 8; for I had been asked to preside at a discussion on 'Faithful work in Common Duties': if they could have known what a bright exemplar of this I had left at home! Some twenty people were present, all women, and mostly young; shopgirls and the like.

I spoke out plainly on the subject of servants' work and servants' hands; and several of the girls spoke, most of them agreeing that folk should not be ashamed of common work, but all in favour of soft white hands. . . .

Monday, 24 November . . . Hannah had already been, this morning, to see her sick friend[4] & take her something of her own making; & had tried in vain to buy material for making jelly for her. But after dinner, she went, unknown to me, to the Temple Kitchen and begged some jelly there; and she and I drove to Clerkenwell together, to take it. She went into the sickroom, talked to the patient & tended her, and spoke aptly and gently to the humble folks about her: and then she would have me make myself known to Mrs. Smith and pray with her. 'This is Mr. Munby—my husband—will you shake hands with him?' said this dear soul, tearfully: and then we knelt down, and I prayed aloud . . .

I took the dying woman's hand—a large strong hand, even at 90—and Hannah walked home with me, and went to bed, overcome with half-hysterical excitement.

Tuesday, 2 December . . . home by the Embankment by 6, to dine: but found my Hannah suffering from pain in her back, and unable to do anything. The fear that she might be ill has always been to me a living and present horror: but only since my marriage have I realized this sweet but terrible burden, the being utterly *alone* with one who is dearest, and being unable to consult friends or have ready female aid, if she should have to suffer. I got her some tea and sat with her till 7.30, when she seemed better: then went for medicine to a chemist's, got some dinner, and home to her again, and nursed her and got her to bed.

Wednesday, 3 December. Hannah, after I had rubbed her night & morning, was better, and went about cheerfully as usual, to my great relief . . .

Saturday, 6 December. I left my Hannah, after breakfast, in her cotton frock, & cap, and apron, a bare-armed servant lass: but at 1.30, she met me at the

[4] Mrs. Smith of Clerkenwell, who had been Hannah's friend and protectress in London for twenty years. She died a few days later, aged 89.

Victoria Station, drest anew from top to toe, and looking not merely ladylike, but dignified and charming, as ever. I meant to take her to Eastbourne; but the cold wind decided us in favour of Dorking: which we reached about 3, and walked up to the White Horse, where they gave us a snug parlour and bedroom ensuite. . . .

Sunday, 7 December: Dorking. After breakfast, Hannah and I were alone together in our pretty parlour at the White Horse, and she read to me: for a certain malaise kept us indoors, and prevented us from walking to Ranmore Church. . . . The Parish church of Dorking is being rebuilt, all save the chancel. . . . At 3, we went to service at the Public Hall, which is used as a pis aller by the Vicar and his Curates . . .

After service we had a walk . . .

At Hannah lay down till near seven, and then we had tea and she read to me, the Psalms and Hannah More. In the fields, she had shown her country girl's knowledge of birds and trees and plants, and her own delight in beauty: and how she unfolded all her sweet vivacity and childlike winsomeness, and all her womanly intelligence and sense. To see her as she sits opposite me now, dainty and beautiful, full of grace in countenance & movement, drest like a lady and with spotless shapely hands, and talking eagerly about Dr. Johnson and the rest of Mistress More's famous friends, a stranger would think it incredible that she ever was what she talks of being again tomorrow: for sitting here like a fine lady, she talks quite calmly of how she will fetch the sweep tomorrow, & will 'clean after' him, and will perhaps scour the stairs 'in her dirt'. . . .

Tuesday, 9 December . . . My Hannah, like Selene, has three aspects: the ladylike and etherial, as at Dorking on Sunday; the neat and homely—not too good For human nature's daily food[5]—as this evening; and the Hecatish or laborious. . . . In each she is equally charming to me; but though her sweet nature underlies them all, her manners and her talk are influenced by her dress and appearance, and are appropriate to it. Drest as a lady, her speech and attitudes and ways are all grace and dignity: drest as a drudge, she works with manlike vigour, rough, and black, and silent: drest, as tonight, like a servant after work is over, she uses kitchen ways & talk; eats her supper with her fingers' aid, wipes her mouth with the back of her hand. Says she, with a smile, 'You have such a deal to do, and yet you *will* go to them college meetings!' . . .

Wednesday, 10 December. Dense fog all day. . . . Dined at Rouget's, and went to a Council Meeting at the Working Women's College; 25 members, men and women of various classes, present to discuss the question whether *men* shall not be admitted as students. Amos & the Mallesons strongly in favour of this: others, like myself, anxious to keep the College for women only. Result, nil, and general

[5] Wordsworth.

chaos. I had been anxious about Hannah all day, having had to leave her utterly alone so long, & knowing that she must go out . . . on errands in the fog. But at ten p.m., I found a bright warm room, and tea, and my bonny wife coming forward all rosy and cheerful. . . . She had been alone all day, but had not moped, oh no! '. . . so I haven't had a minute to read that article in the Athenæum you told me of; but I will, now!'

She did; and we talked about the College.

Friday, 12 December . . . home by 6.30 to dinner, bringing the Christmas numbers of the Graphic and the Illustrated News, that my darling might please herself with the pictures. Her money for marketing ran short today: 'I was within two minds o' coming to you for some,' said she: 'and if I had, I should ha' come i' my working things, and brought a note; and I should ha' said "Will you please give that to Mr. Munby, and tell him his servant is waiting?"' This is the fourth day on which no sky nor daylight has been visible, and work has had to be done by gaslight. Hannah, busy in the house and strictly enjoined not to go out except on necessary errands, has not felt the loathsome atmosphere so much. . . .

Tuesday, 23 December . . . home at 4.30, with a porter to fetch my luggage. 'Is everything ready?' 'Yes, Sir,' said the servant who stood waiting. . . . And the porter took up the luggage and went away; and then that servant came into her master's arms; and his cab was kept waiting for a while. I have been troubled about leaving my Hannah this Christmas, and have had to feel more than ever her lowliness and loneliness; for now that the old dame of Clerkenwell is dead she has not a house in London to go to, except a few kitchens where she herself once lived, and one or two poor dwellings of her old fellowservants. So I wrote to Sister Ellen, asking her to come here to Hannah; and she thankfully answers that she will, if her Missis give her leave; and I invited Sister Polly from Ipswich, offering to pay her fare. She too, after much difficulty with her masters, is able to accept with pathetic gratitude: . . . So she, and perhaps a friend of like estate, are to come by night train, arriving at Shoreditch at *4 a.m.*: and she is to walk hither at that strange hour, and pull a string which Hannah will attach to her own wrist and hang out of the bedroom window. Such is their plan; and Hannah is happy, and is preparing Christmas cheer; so I was able to leave her with less apprehension. I went by the 5.30 train: reached Clifton at eleven, and found there my dear parents, and Carry and Edward.

Thursday, 25 December. Christmas Day. I went with my father and sister to Clifton Church in the morning, and afterwards to Margaret's[6] house in the village. Then at 2.30, came the Christmas dinner: the dear parents presiding; Carry, Edward, and I; Margaret and her three children; Edward Pearson: but

[6] Widow of his brother John.

not my dear and lowly wife. We sat afterwards, giving presents to the children, and watching their play, and looking out on the lawn at sunset. . . .

Wednesday, 31 December. Soon after 4 a.m. I reached the Temple. There was a good fire burning: tea made, my letters set out, the room looking bright and cleanly, and cheerful with Christmas holly. I go into the bedroom: there is her servant's cap, laid aside, and her apron, and there is her common cotton frock, in which she does her rough work, hanging up behind the door, along with her old strawbonnet. There are her mother's sampler, and her own, framed and hanging on the wainscot wall: and under the homely patchwork quilt, there is She, my bonny servant-wife. Her sweet rosy face is there, broad awake; watching for me, starting up to welcome me.

When I awake and dress, towards 10 a.m., the parlour fire is long since lighted, the room swept, the kitchen fire lighted too; the breakfast ready—*my* breakfast, for she has had her own. She, my Hannah, is moving about, busy and cheerful and bright; telling me of this and that, as I watch her through the doorway. . . . She is now busy to her heart's content; unpacking my dear mother's big hamper, showing forth its contents with critical eye—ham, and brawn, & brown-bread; she unpacks too the furniture I have brought, and determines to use its matting-cover as an approach to her kitchendoor; she clears away the débris, and tastefully adds my bayleaves and barberry leaves to her Christmas greenery. . . . After dining at the Club, I went home at seven to this sweet wife: whom I found now in her evening dress of redbrown stuff, with long sleeves, and a black silk apron; and we spent the last evening of this eventful year together, not without a final prayer, as the midnight bells began to ring, in the moonlight.

For once Munby discards the note of gloom with which he habitually ends the year: husband and wife are left isolated in their hard-won, precarious happiness. But Hannah too has struggled to the final page of her own less formal diary.

Hannah's Diary: undated . . . M. went home for a week this Christmas, & i had my sister Polly up for a day or two—Mr. Thornbury came the morning after Christmas day . . . i was in my cotton frock & cap as usual, & Mr. T. came in this room as he sometimes does to read his letters, & all the while he seem'd in a particularly good humour & talk'd about several things, himself & Mr. Munby & me, & was in such good spirits, he told me, & i answer'd him civilly, calling him 'sir', & being quite respectful only talking freely too, for i felt in good spirits too, after spending the day yesterday with Ellen & the children in the nursery at Putney. Well, when he got up to go i was so surprised to hear him ask if i'd any mistletoe, & he look'd all round for it. I said 'Oh no sir i never think o' that.' he said 'Oh but now is the time, & I sh^d *like* to kiss you under it.' I said thank you

sir, your very kind, i dare not, & indeed i *wouldn't* allow it, & i walk'd round the table. He was very civil, & said 'Well, shake hands', so i did & he wish'd me a very good Christmas & a happy new year. I thank'd him & wish'd him the same & he went away. I thought M. would be vex'd to hear it, but i told him—he was not vex'd, & said it show'd how Mr. T. never suspected i was anything but a servant, & i thought so too. Mr. T. has been exceedingly civil ever since to me.

YEARS OF CRISIS

1874–9

At the beginning of his diary for 1874, which like its predecessor amounted to approximately 75,000 words, Munby set down a number of events in the year which struck him in retrospect as significant. One was his father's seventieth birthday. Another he described as follows: '*12 March*. The small estate of *Naburn Lodge*, which has belonged to my family for more than a century, sold by my father for £13,600.' As the Naburn estate derived from Munby's maternal grandmother Elizabeth Woodhouse (Mrs. Forth), its disposal suggests a family arrangement to ease Joseph Munby's financial worries. The device seems to have succeeded; the complaints of 'the father' disappear from his son's diary for the short remainder of his life.

Another problem was resolved less satisfactorily. The Working Women's College, where Munby taught Latin, had split over the question of introducing mixed classes, and in 1874 divided into two separate institutions. The majority body remained at Queen Square and was henceforth to be known as 'The College for Men and Women'. Munby sided with the minority, who preferred to keep the classes exclusive to women: '*16 October*. The *College for Working Women*, of which I am one of the promoters, opened at 5 Fitzroy Street.' This proved to be a short-lived institution.

In the Temple, the conjugal charade continued. Hannah scrubbed on. She cleaned the windows. She cleaned the yard outside their house with pail and broom, looking as dirty as possible, to show that she was an honest servant, not afraid of work. This was a feat Munby particularly liked to watch, and which he later described in *Dorothy*:

> Then, she can scrub, and scour, and swill with the bucket and besom,
> Flinging her pailfuls afar mightily over the yard;
> Sweeping the water away with rapid and vigorous movement,
> Till on the clean wet flags never a footmark appears. . . .

The consequent state of Hannah's hands provided an excuse for her refusing to accompany Munby into the country at week-ends. '"They are